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ABSTRACT

This report is concerned with students who either dropped out or were dismissed from grades 9 through 12 during 1983-84 in 14 school systems in Arkansas. It is intended for use by state government, the State Department of Education, state and local policymakers, school administrators and staffs, parents, and young people. The data presented in this report were obtained from questionnaires completed by schools for each student who dropped out, was suspended, or was expelled during 1983-84 and from interviews with over 200 of these students. In Part I of the report, the magnitude of the dropout problem is considered, demographic characteristics of the dropouts and selected characteristics of their families are examined, and reasons for withdrawals and exclusions are discussed. The two types of school departures, dropouts and dismissals, are compared. Findings are summarized and recommendations are suggested. Part II of the report deals with the role of alcohol and drugs in the dropout problem and is based on personal interviews with the students. Survey results are presented according to beliefs about community drug and alcohol problems, patterns of drug use, reasons for using drugs, drug information sources, and other related information. The relationship between the use of controlled substances and school dropouts and dismissals is discussed. Findings are summarized and recommendations are made. The appendices contain the Personal Interview Questionnaire and a sample of detailed suspension, expulsion, and attendance policies. (NRB)

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Arkansas' High School Dropouts: Voluntary and Involuntary

Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families

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ARKANSAS' HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS: VOLUNTARY AND INVOLUNTARY

Selected School Districts, 1983-1984

Part I: Profile

Part II: Alcohol and Drug Usage

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Introduction

Each school year thousands of school-age children in Arkansas drop out of school or are excluded by school authorities from attending school for varying periods of time. Exclusions take the form of suspensions and expulsions and are basically disciplinary. They are utilized mainly at the secondary school level but can reach down to the elementary school. Many of the dropouts and dismissed children never graduate.

At present, there is a stunning lack of public information and data on exactly how many children are leaving school each year and what their reasons are for doing so. In many cases, children are suspended, expelled, or drop out of school for reasons which possibly could have been addressed had the school personnel or others accurately identified the problem and made an early referral to an appropriate resource. This suggested remedy could also assist many of the service agencies in providing appropriate intervention efforts during the early stages of a difficulty, rather than after the problem has escalated into a crisis for the youth or his or her family.

In Arkansas, 701,000 people have less than a high school education, with between 135,000 and 300,000 defined as functional illiterates.[1/] The consequent economic impact is staggering. In considering income differences, it is estimated that high school graduates earn $90,000 more in a lifetime than a person who does not graduate and $199,000 more than those who do not complete the eighth grade.[2/] Average unemployment benefits are nearly $91.00 per week, while the average cost of educating a child for our work force is just over $40.00 weekly. It is estimated that school districts in the state lose approximately $9.6 million annually in state and federal revenue which is distributed on the basis of pupil enrollment. This breaks down to an average of $1,030 per student.

The attendant social impact related to dropping out is almost incalculable. Conservatively, 70% of the inmates in the state's prison system have less than a high school education. The Department of Youth Services estimates that nearly one-fourth of the youth involved in its programs and in the juvenile court system are out of school. Finally, research literature finds that dropouts feel more alienated and powerless than do high school graduates and sense their lives are less meaningful and more hopeless. In brief, large numbers of children out of school represent an educational, economic, and social loss to our communities.

[1] *Southwest Times Record*, "Schooling for Survival", December, 1982.

[2] *Adult Education in Arkansas: A Review of Program Impact*, 1980.

Against this background, Arkansas Advocates has conducted a major research project on school dropouts and dismissals in Arkansas. With joint funding from the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation and the Office on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention, we were able to collect from 14 selected school districts data on each child who dropped out or was dismissed from school during the 1983-1984 academic year, and to conduct personal interviews with over 200 of these students who were randomly selected.

This report is the culmination of that effort. It is particularly crucial and timely in light of the focus on education reform. The needs of these "at-risk" children must be addressed in the current push to achieve true quality in our public schools. The report should be valuable on many levels: the legislative and administrative branches of state government; the State Department of Education; state and local level policy-making groups; school administrators and staff; parents and young people. It is also intended for the general public in Arkansas, which, we believe, must become more aware of the responsibility to educate <u>all</u> youth. Without substantial assistance and support for dropout prevention efforts, a marked reduction in dropout rates is unlikely. We must begin to take seriously the need to educate all of our youth, including the 20-30% of them who are either pushed out or choose to leave school.

Approach and Methodology

This report is concerned with students who dropped out or were expelled or suspended from secondary grades 9 through 12 during the school year 1983-84 in 14 school systems located in the following cities: Arkadelphia, Brinkley, Camden, Clarksville, Cotter, Eureka Springs, Forrest City, Heber Springs, Hot Springs, McGehee, Pine Bluff, Siloam Springs, Springdale, and Waldron. Geographic location and size of the secondary school population were the primary considerations in the selection of the systems. Enrollment in these school systems accounted for about 9 percent of the state's total enrollment in grades 9 through 12 in 1983-84.

The first part of the report examines various characteristics of the problem except the role of alcohol and drugs. A separate section is devoted to alcohol and drugs. Each of the two sections can be considered individually and each presents separate conclusions and recommendations.

Subjects covered in Part I include the magnitude of the problem; the demographic characteristics of the students involved; selected characteristics of their families; and reasons for the withdrawals and exclusions from both the perspective of the schools and of the students.

Part I first treats dropouts and dismissals as a unit for an overview of all students who left school for any reason other than transferring. It then compares the two types of school departures--voluntary and involuntary. (Although some transferees are, in fact, dropouts and perhaps even dismissed students, they are excluded from the report because the data did not distinguish between them and true transferees.)

According to the size of their total enrollment in grades 9 through 12, the school districts are classified into three categories: "Small" refers to systems with enrollments in grades 9 through 12 that total 500 students or less (7 systems); "medium" is 501 to 1,000 students (4 systems); "large" is a student body in the four grades of more than 1,000 students (3 systems). Of the approximately 11,200 students enrolled in grades 9 through 12 in the 14 school systems as of October 1, 1983, a little over half (52 percent) were in large systems with the remainder about equally divided between small and medium systems.

The two principal sources of data for the project were brief questionnaires that the schools in the 14 systems completed on each student who dropped out or was suspended or expelled during 1983-1984 and follow-up personal interviews of the students based on a random sample drawn from the schools' returns. The interviews were conducted in the summer and fall of 1984. The Center for Urban and Governmental Affairs, Research Division, at the University of Arkansas, Little Rock, constructed the sample, assisted with the comprehensive questionnaire used by the interviewers and processed the data. (A copy of the questionnaire completed by the schools and a copy of that used by the interviewers are in Appendix A).

The first part of the report is based primarily on data furnished by the schools; the section on alcohol and drugs is based on the personal interviews.

Because of differences in the format of their questionnaires, replies from the two sources regarding reasons for dropouts and dismissals were handled differently. Schools were given a limited number of options from which to check the reasons. If they checked more than one reason for a pupil, only the most definite or concrete one was tabulated.

In the selection, "suspension/expulsion" superseded any other reason. Priority for the tabulation of the dropout choices was: pregnancy/marriage; grades, economic reasons; lack of interest; and others (peer conflict, conflict with schools, incarceration and any other reason not listed among the choices).

In the personal interviews, respondents were not presented with a list of reasons from which to make a selection. Rather, interviewers recorded whatever the respondents replied as their reasons for dropping out or being dismissed. The large number of reasons students gave were organized according to the checklist used by the schools. Respondents who gave more than one reason (which most did), were credited with each one.

The information in this report reflects the school policies in effect during the 1983-1984 school year.

School Dropouts and Dismissals
Part I: Profile

Statutory Basis for Suspensions and Expulsions

The statutory power to exclude pupils from school apparently rests on Arkansas Statute 80-1516 that permits schools to suspend students because of "immorality, refractory conduct, insubordination, infectious disease, habitual uncleanliness, or other conduct that would tend to impair the discipline of the school, or harm the other pupils." The statute also permits teachers to suspend pupils, subject to appeal to the school board. Moreover, because Statute 80-1503 required students to attend school 150 days for a full nine-month term in each school year, school authorities also suspend or expel students because of excessive absenteeism. Normally, this occurred for absences in excess of 25 days a year, generally divided into 12 in the first semester and 13 in the second.

The more than 360 school districts in Arkansas have a great deal of discretion in setting suspension and expulsion policies and in the implementation of the policies. Therefore, only generalizations about policies and procedures are possible. In general, expulsions are for a severe offense or for repeated offenses and suspensions. They prohibit students from returning to school for the remainder of an academic semester or academic year. The students lose credits for these periods of expulsion. The decision to expel a student from school rests with the school board, upon the recommendation of the principal or superintendent.

Suspensions, on the other hand, generally are for shorter periods of time, the duration differing among districts and according to offense. The maximum for a single suspension normally does not exceed 10 school days, although there are long-term as well as indefinite suspensions. Suspensions also may vary by type and name. Suspensions of only a few days euphemistically may be labeled "sent home from school." There are "bus suspensions", which for the student who lives far from school and has no other means of getting there, are tantamount to a suspension from school. In their policy guidelines some school districts are very specific about the suspension penalty for a particular type of offense, while others are not. (Appendix B provides an example of local school policy correlating offense with penalty, defining expulsion and suspension, and explaining the attendance policy.)

The decision to suspend a student from school rests with the school principal or superintendent. Teachers may suspend or even expel students from their class. A parent is, in most cases, supposed to accompany the student's return to school for a readmission conference.

Students usually are not allowed to make up the work they missed while suspended. Some schools conduct suspension schools or in-school suspension programs. Certain programs create individualized work to meet the needs and capabilities of each suspended student and attempt to determine and help solve the student's problems through testing, conferences, and the like. Other in-school programs merely give the students "busy work" with their chief advantage seeming to be keeping students off the streets during suspension.

As opposed to expulsions and suspensions, the act of dropping out of school implies voluntary action. Students who qualify for exemption from the state's compulsory school attendance act,[1] however, may be encouraged, overtly or covertly, to take advantage of the exemption and withdraw from school under certain circumstances. For example, schools can not prohibit girls who are pregnant from attending school but their attitude toward such a student may foster her withdrawal. Repeated suspensions may result in withdrawals. Sometimes parents are given the option to "voluntarily withdraw" their child who, otherwise, will be recommended for expulsion. Nor is there always a clear-cut line between a dropout and a dismissal. A school may drop a student because of excessive absenteeism, whereas the student may have had no intention of continuing school.

As in the case of expelled and suspended students, dropouts may re-enroll in school until they reach age 21--the oldest age students may remain in public school in Arkansas.

School Dropouts and Dismissals

Relationship to Total Enrollment

At least once during the 1983-84 school year, approximately 860 students in grades 9 through 12 dropped out or were suspended or expelled from the 14 secondary school systems this report covers. Excluded from this count are students who, having just completed the 8th grade, took advantage of their first legal opportunity under the compulsory attendance act to leave school, and, consequently, they did not even enroll for the 9th grade. Also excluded are students who ostensibly transferred to another school in or out of the area but, in fact, never did so.

[1]The compulsory school attendance act (80-1504) exempts students from attending school for any of the following reasons: over age 15 (over age 16 under the new standards); completed the eighth grade; mentally or physically handicapped; or to help support a widowed mother.

The 860 students who withdrew or were dismissed represented about 8 percent of the almost 11,200 students enrolled as of October 1, 1983 in grades 9 through 12 in the reporting schools. As shown in Table 1, the departure rate increased with the size of the school system, rising from approximately 5 per 100 students in systems with 500 or fewer secondary school students to about 9 per 100 in systems with more than 1,000 students.

Table 1

ENROLLMENT, DROPOUTS AND DISMISSALS, SELECTED SCHOOL SYSTEMS, 1983 — 1984

		Race			Sex		
	Total	White	Nonwhite	Unknown	Male	Female	Unknown
				Total (N = 14)			
Enrollment	11,197	7,501	3,696	0	5,569	5,432	196
Dropouts/dismissals	857	558	287	12	347	324	186
Percent of enrollment	7.7	7.4	7.8	-	6.2	6.0	-
				Small Systems (N = 7)			
Enrollment	2,534	2,060	479	0	1,279	1,257	3
Dropouts/dismissals	138	100	29	9	79	59	0
Percent of enrollment	5.4	4.9	6.1	-	6.2	4.7	-
				Medium Systems (N = 4)			
Enrollment	2,780	1,872	908	0	1,346	1,353	81
Dropouts/dismissals	187	153	32	2	97	90	0
Percent of enrollment	6.7	8.2	3.5	-	7.2	6.7	-
				Large Systems (N = 3)			
Enrollment	5,878	3,569	2,309	0	2,944	2,822	112
Dropouts/dismissals	532	305	226	1	171	175	186
Percent of enrollment	9.1	8.5	9.8	-	5.8	6.2	-

NOTE: Size of school system determined by enrollment in grades 9 — 12 as of October 1, 1983; Small = 500 students or less; Medium = 501 — 1,000; Large = 1,001 or more.

Source: Enrollment data supplied by the Arkansas Department of Education.

Overall, there was little difference between the rate for white and non-white students--about 7 or 8 percent of their respective enrollments. The rate, however, did differ by size of school system. In the medium-size school systems the proportion of enrolled white students who left or were dismissed was twice that of the non-white. In the small and large school systems, on the other hand, the departure rate was higher for non-white students than for white students--24 percent higher in the small systems (6.1 percent compared to 4.9 percent) and 15 percent higher in the large school systems.

Regardless of their relative number, the actual number of white dropouts and dismissals always was higher than that of other races because white students accounted for about two-thirds of the student bodies of the 14 target school systems (7,501 out of 11,197). Statewide, white students were about three-fourths of the secondary school enrollment.

Regarding departure rates by sex, in the small and medium school systems the rate for males was higher than for females, with the excess reaching over 30 percent in the small systems (6.2 percent compared to 4.7 percent). In the large schools, available statistics, although incomplete, indicate that the rate of departure for female students exceeded that of males by a differential of about 7 percent.

Based on the average aggregate departure rate of approximately 8 percent for the 14 school systems, statewide, an estimated 10,000 Arkansas students in grades 9 and above left or were asked to leave school at least once during 1983-84. Further, if statewide enrollment in the 9th grade at the beginning of school year 1983-84 were decreased each succeeding grade at the departure rate experienced by the 14 school systems for that grade and shown on the following tabulation, by graduation--the end of school year 1986-87--the accumulated departure rate over the 4-year period would range from an estimated 22 to 27 percent.

Departure Rates By Grade

	Grade				
	Total	9th	10th	11th	12th
Enrollment	11,197	2,768	2,949	2,783	2,697
Dropouts/ Dismissals	857	180	266	240	171
% of Enrollment	7.7	6.5	9.0	8.6	6.3

The accumulative departure rate, of course, depends upon the number of students who return to school and stay until they graduate. Until age 21, students who have served their term of suspension or expulsion, as well as dropouts, may re-enroll in school. During the personal interviews, about 37 percent of the respondents reported that they were re-enrolled in school. Some of the others said they were going to return, but most either did not want to or said they were not going to do so even though they might want to. Even those who return, of course, may not see it through to graduation.

Demographic Characteristics

According to the returns from the schools, students ages 16 and 17 accounted for approximately 55 percent (27.9 percent each) of the 860 students who, at least once during the year, dropped out or were asked to leave school. (Table 2). About 20 percent were under age 16 when they left and about 25 percent were 18 or older. Males were in the majority by a 7 percent margin, (51.7 percent males and 48.3 percent females). White dropouts and dismissals outnumbered non-white about 2-to-1 (65.1 percent compared to 34.9 percent).

Demographic characteristics varied by size of the school system. Compared to the other school systems, medium size systems had a relatively smaller number of non-white students and 15-year-olds among their dropouts and dismissals; small school systems, on the average, had a higher proportion of males; and large systems had a higher ratio of non-whites among their dropout and dismissed population.

Regardless of the size of the school system and regardless of sex or race, at least 55 percent of the students were in the 10th or 11th grade when they left, with generally more leaving in the first quarter of the school year than in any other quarter. (Table 2).

Table 2

CHARACTERISTICS OF DROPOUTS AND DISMISSALS, SELECTED SCHOOL SYSTEMS, 1983 — 1984

	Total (100%)	School System		
		Small (100%)	Medium (100%)	Large (100%)
Age*				
14	3.4	1.6	1.3	5.2
15	16.2	20.2	10.9	17.1
16	27.9	27.1	32.7	25.9
17	27.9	23.3	32.7	27.4
18 or older	24.6	27.9	22.4	24.4
Sex*				
Male	51.7	57.2	51.3	49.4
Female	48.3	42.8	48.7	50.6
Race**				
White	65.1	72.5	81.8	57.3
Nonwhite	34.9	27.5	18.2	42.7
Grade Left				
9	21.0	23.9	16.6	21.8
10	31.0	27.5	33.7	31.0
11	28.0	27.5	25.7	28.9
12	20.0	21.0	24.1	18.2
Quarter Left				
1	31.3	33.3	29.4	31.4
2	25.6	21.0	20.9	28.6
3	25.0	21.0	29.9	24.2
4	18.1	24.6	19.8	15.8

*Returns omitting age and sex were excluded from calculations.

**Students whose race was not identified were included in "nonwhite."

Background and Attitudes

The following data on family background and attitudes are based on personal interviews with a random sample of the 1983-84 school dropouts and dismissed students. The parents of approximately 40 percent of the student respondents were married; parents of another 40 percent were divorced or separated; 9 percent, widowed; and 11 percent, unmarried.

Among students living in two-parent families, both parents worked in almost two-thirds of the cases. A parent worked in about 49 percent of the families where there was one parent only. Close to half of the students worked, about 20 percent full-time and over 27 percent part-time or occasionally. Restaurant work was the most common type of work, followed by babysitting.

Approximately one-third of the students claimed that their parents or guardians received public assistance such as AFDC or Food Stamps. From the students' perspective, out of every five respondents, one viewed its family as being either poor or very poor compared to other families; another student believed its family, while not poor, had an income below average; two out of five believed their family income was average; and the fifth one believed its family income ranged from above average to wealthy.

Virtually all of the respondents reported having siblings (98 percent). Among those with siblings, 54 percent had at least one sibling leave school before graduation (23 percent had more than one). These are dramatic figures, especially in view of the fact that included in the 46 percent whose siblings did not leave school, undoubtedly, are students whose brothers and sisters were of preschool or elementary school age and did not as yet have the occasion to leave school.

Respondents who were not returning to school were queried as to what they would do. Their replies, of course, are not exclusive of each other. About 58 percent said they were going to work; 54 percent would pursue some form of education including obtaining a GED (24 percent) and going to vocational technical schools (12 percent). Other replies included care for a child or for a household (18 percent); getting married (6 percent) and, joining the military (7 percent).

Reasons for School Departures

The unshaded bars on Figure 1 present reasons the schools reported for students dropping out or being excluded from attending school. If schools checked more than one reason for a student, the most specific or concrete reason was selected for analysis--in effect, one reason per student. On the other hand, the shaded bars, based on personal interviews, credit each student with as many reasons as he or she told the interviewer. Over 60 percent of the respondents gave more than one reason.

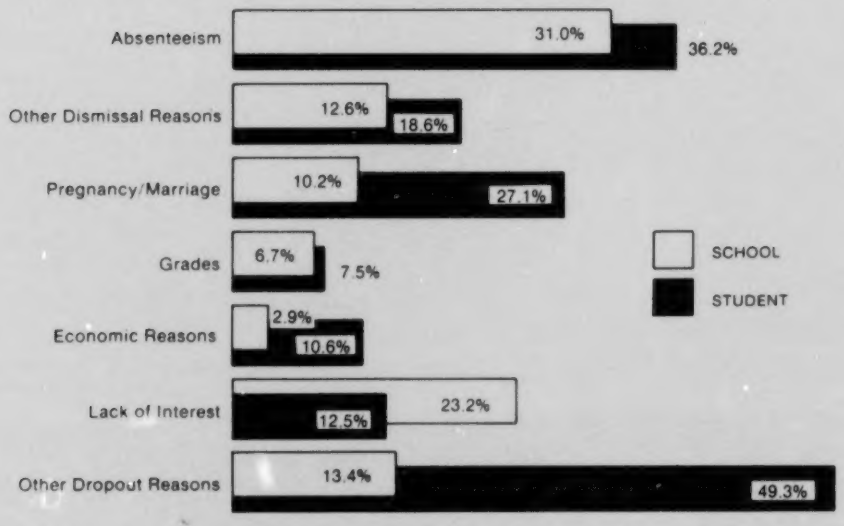
Both schools and students indicated that absenteeism ("dayed out") was the single most common cause for students leaving school. According to the schools 31 percent of all departures was due to absenteeism which, when combined with other causes for suspensions and expulsions, represented almost 44 percent of all departures.

Approximately 36 percent of the student respondents gave absenteeism as at least one of the causes for their departure. According to the students, absenteeism together with all of the other causes for which they were expelled or suspended, accounted for somewhere around 55 percent of all departures.

The data suggest that schools, perhaps, were unaware of the extent to which pregnancy/marriage and economic reasons caused students to leave school. At the same time, schools attributed more importance to lack of interest as a cause than did the student respondents.

Figure 1

Dropouts & Dismissals According to Reasons Given by Schools & Students 1983 - 84



NOTE: Schools gave the single most specific reason, whereas, students gave multiple responses.

Dropouts vs. Dismissals

Comparison of Characteristics

As shown on the tabulation below, of the approximately 860 students who left school sometime during 1983-84, 56.4 percent were dropouts (about 485 students); the remaining 43.6 percent (about 375 students) were either suspended or expelled by the schools. In the medium size schools, however, the dismissal rate exceeded the dropout rate. Of the approximately 560 white students in the census of dropouts and dismissals, 41 percent had been expelled or suspended and 59 percent had dropped out. Of the approximately 300 non-white students, 49 percent had been expelled or suspended--a dismissal rate about 20 percent higher than for white--and 51 percent had dropped out.

Races by Type of Departure

	Total (857)	White (558)	Non-white (299)
Percent			
Dropouts	56.4	59.0	51.0
Dismissals	43.6	41.0	49.0

Note: Students whose race was not identified were included in "non-white".

Table 3 shows that most dropouts were female; most dismissed students, male. Schools tended to expel or suspend students at a younger age than the age at which students dropped out on their own. Of the students dismissed by schools, 21.3 percent were 14 or 15 years of age whereas only 17.9 percent of the dropouts were that young. The grades at which the students left school reflect this situation. Ninth graders were suspended or expelled at twice the rate at which they dropped out, 29.7 percent and 14.3 percent respectively. In contrast, 12th graders made up 16 percent of the students who were excluded from attending school at least once during the year but acocunted for 23 percent of the dropouts. State labor laws that require youths under age 16 to have an employment certificate from the school or the labor department may be at least partially responsible for the lower incidence of younger students among the dropout population.

Table 3

COMPARISON OF DROPOUTS AND DISMISSALS, BY CHARACTERISTIC, 1983 — 1984

	Percentage	
	Dropouts (N = 483)	Dismissals (N = 374)
Age*		
14	2.3	4.6
15	15.6	16.7
16	26.9	28.9
17	30.5	25.2
18 or older	24.7	24.6
Sex*		
Male	43.1	60.7
Female	56.9	39.3
Race**		
White	68.3	61.0
Nonwhite	31.7	39.0
Grade		
9	14.3	29.7
10	33.1	28.3
11	29.6	25.9
12	23.0	16.0
Quarter		
1	33.5	28.3
2	28.0	22.7
3	25.3	24.6
4	13.2	24.3

*Returns omitting age and sex were excluded from calculations.

**Students whose race was not identified were included in "nonwhite."

Suspensions and expulsions were distributed fairly evenly throughout the school year. Dropouts, however, occurred mainly in the first quarter and declined in each succeeding quarter.

Comparison of Reasons

Large schools believe that lack of interest was the single major reason for students dropping out with pregnancy or marriage a distant second. (Table 4). In the small schools pregnancy/marriage was the major cause of dropouts, with failing grades a close second.

Table 4

DISTRIBUTION OF DROPOUTS BY REASON, GRADES 9 — 12, BY SELECTED SCHOOL SYSTEM, 1983 — 1984

		School System		
	Total (100%)	Small (100%)	Medium (100%)	Large (100%)
Grades	11.8	23.8	7.6	9.9
Lack of Interest	41.2	20.0	7.6	54.6
Economic Reasons	5.2	10.0	3.8	4.3
Pregnancy/Marriage	18.0	26.2	6.3	18.8
Others/Unknown	23.8	20.0	74.7	12.3

To the extent schools reported the sex and age of the students who dropped out of school, pregnancy/marriage was the single most common reason among students ages 14 and 15 (23.6 percent) as well as among the older students 18 years and over (27.6 percent). (Table 5). (Approximately 80 percent of all students who dropped out for this reason fell into these two age brackets). The school reports indicate that lack of interest, followed by grades was the most common reason male students left. Failing grades accounted for 17.6 percent of the non-white dropouts, or twice the proportion it was for white students. Pregnancy/marriage also was a more common reason for dropping out among non-white students than among white students, 24.8 percent compared to 14.8 percent.

Among the students who were expelled or suspended, absenteeism was by far the most common cause for their dismissals. On the average, absenteeism accounted for 71 percent of the dismissals, with all other causes responsible for 29 percent. (Table 5). The incidence of absenteeism as a major cause of suspensions and expulsions was somewhat below the average in the large schools, namely 65.9 percent. Dismissals due to absenteeism were 75.9 percent of all dismissals in the medium school systems and 78.7 percent in the small systems.

Table 5

PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS, BY CHARACTERISTICS AND REASON FOR DROPPING OUT OR DISMISSAL, 1983 — 1984

	Dropouts							Dismissals			
	Total			Lack of		Pregnancy/	Other/	Total		Absen-	Other/
	Number	Percent	Grades	Interest	Economic	Marriage	Unknown	Number	Percent	teeism	Unknown
Total	483	100	11.8	41.2	5.2	18.0	23.8	374	100	71.1	28.9
Age*											
14 and 15	55	100	14.5	21.8	0	23.6	40.0	65	100	76.9	23.1
16	83	100	15.7	21.7	4.8	18.1	39.8	88	100	79.5	20.5
17	94	100	21.3	24.5	3.2	24.5	26.6	77	100	75.3	24.7
18 or older	76	100	17.1	22.4	9.2	27.6	23.7	75	100	78.7	21.3
Sex*											
Male	150	100	25.3	30.7	4.7	2.0-	37.3	196	100	71.4	28.6
Female	198	100	9.1	17.2	3.5	42.4	27.8	127	100	78.0	22.0
Race**											
White	330	100	9.1	44.8	6.7	14.8	24.5	228	100	72.4	27.6
Nonwhite	153	100	17.6	33.3	2.0	24.8	22.2	146	100	69.2	30.8
Grade											
9	69	100	13.1	36.2	2.9	15.9	31.9	111	100	52.3	47.7
10	160	100	11.3	50.6	5.6	8.1	24.4	106	100	78.3	21.7
11	143	100	9.8	43.4	2.8	23.1	21.0	97	100	75.3	24.7
12	111	100	14.4	27.9	9.0	27.0	21.6	60	100	86.7	13.3

*Returns omitting age and sex were excluded from calculations.

Summary of Findings

Based on the 1983-84 experience of 14 selected school districts in Arkansas, about 8 percent of the student body in grades 9 through 12 dropped out of school or were asked to leave at least once during the year. This rate translates into an estimated 10,000 secondary school students out of school in Arkansas sometime during the school year. By the time students enrolled in the 9th grade on October 1, 1983 reach graduation in mid-1987, an estimated 22 to 27 out of every 100 students in the initial 9th grade class will not be graduated because of having dropped out of school or having been dismissed.

Although the percentage of students who dropped out or were dismissed was about the same for both white and non-white students--7 or 8 percent of their respective enrollments--the actual count was higher for white students because of their greater representation in the student body. Most student dropouts or dismissals were either 16 or 17 years of age and in the 10th or 11th grade when they left. Slightly over half were male.

According to the records of the reporting schools, more students dropped out of school than were asked to leave, 56 percent and 44 percent, respectively. Schools tended to dismiss students at a younger age than the age at which the students left on their own. Although most dropouts, as well as most dismissed students, were white, when the races are considered separately, the proportion of non-white students suspended or expelled exceeded that of white students by about 20 percent. Among non-white students who left school, 49 percent had been asked to leave; among the white students who left, 41 percent had been asked to do so.

Over 70 percent of the suspended and expelled students were dismissed because of excessive absences. The students dismissed because of absenteeism represented roughly one-third of all students who left school, either voluntarily or otherwise, for whatever reason. A comparison between student responses and school returns suggests that schools were unaware of the extent to which pregnancy, marriage, and economic reasons caused students to leave. Pregnancy, marriage, and grades were far more common reasons for leaving school among non-white dropouts than white dropouts.

Recommendations

A host of complex social, economic, cultural, political, and even biological factors underlie the problem of school dropouts and dismissals. Yet, this modest study of the problem in a few school districts does point out certain features that may be addressed in trying to ameliorate the situation.

At a minimum, general measures to encourage students to remain in school can be adopted. These could include the dissemination by film and by other media methods information on the greater earning power and other advantages available to high school graduates than to dropouts. Because pupil participation in school activities increases interest in school, a very deliberate effort should be directed at getting as many of the "at-risk" students as possible involved in the school environment. Past sibling behavior may serve as an indicator of potential "at-risk" students. More than half of the students interviewed had at least one sibling who had been suspended, expelled, or had dropped out. Sibling behavior might also help to establish the role home environment plays in the problem.

Despite the fact that the study shows that most students were in the 10th and 11th grades when they left high school, measures to discourage leaving may be most effective in the 9th and 12th grades--seniors, because they are so close to graduation ; freshman, because they may be the most persuadable. Under the law in effect at the time, the 9th graders in the study could have quit school upon completion of the 8th grade; yet, they forewent the opportunity to do so. Even though students now must stay in school until age 17, the freshman year still might be a good one in which to wage a strong campaign.

Absenteeism, cited as the major reason for the dismissal of students from school, often is symptomatic of a problem. Schools are not expected to dispense social services, but they can be expected to be interested in seeing that children and youths attend school. School districts, therefore, should have on staff social workers who, when a student has excessive absences or is in the process of accumulating them, investigates the situation and makes referrals to social service agencies.

An alternative worth exploring is the feasibility of utilizing trained community volunteers in the schools, with their primary task being that of making personal contact with children and families when the child begins to exhibit problems such as excessive absenteeism. Whether a trained social worker or community volunteer is used, this recommendation is likely to be more effective if implemented as soon as the child exhibits frequent absenteeism.

Whether a trained social worker or community volunteer is used, this recommendation is likely to be more effective if implemented as soon as the child exhibits frequent absenteeism.

The dismissal of students from school because of absenteeism is a negative re-enforcement of their action. A more positive step would be expansion of in-school alternative classrooms with certified teachers to see that these students receive and have the opportunity to complete their work assignments. This alternative allows students to remain in school during the time of suspension, yet removed from class and the main student body. At the same time, the student remains under school supervision and direction, enabling him to continue course work. In addition, in-school suspension can facilitate the identification of special needs such as counseling, subject remediation, and redirection of behavior.

More alternative schools is another possibility. They probably are best suited for students with long-term dismissals and students for whom the normal school environment may not be appropriate. Alternative schools are expensive and should not be used merely to keep students off the streets; nor should they occupy students with "busy work". Each student in the alternative school should follow an individual plan patterned to his or her needs. Moreover, efforts should be made to discover the causes that lead the student to the alternative school. Such programs should promote intensive personal attention and direction on an individual basis. Changes in attitudes, work habits, behavior, and self-concept as well as remediation in subject areas should be the goals of alternative programs.

Still another approach to reducing the rate of absenteeism is to base funding to local school districts on their average daily attendance rather than on average daily membership. This would make school districts more immediately aware of the financial impact on schools of poor school attendance and of the benefits of actively addressing the problem.

Because much of the dropping out of school and possibly much of the absenteeism are due to economic reasons and to pregnancy and marriage, the possibility of conducting high school classes in the evening should be considered. Youths with jobs during the day could attend the school as could young mothers who have no one to care for their children during the day but can find care in the evening. The night school would offer the same core curriculum as the day school, the required non-core curriculum, and would bestow the same diploma as the day high school. The primary difference between the day and night sections is that the night section would take longer to complete.

The night school program would differ significantly from the current GED program. The GED program basically is a matter of passing a test or attending adult education courses geared to passing the test. The GED program is limited to persons at least 16 years of age or older. It confers only a certificate, the acceptance of which, as the equivalent of a diploma, is declining. In brief, the GED program gives people a "second chance" whereas the purpose of the night high school, it is hoped, would reduce the need for the second chance.

Another means of helping students who are experiencing economic hardship is to expand work-study programs. Students perhaps can be polled to determine areas in which they would like to work and take related courses. Publicizing the programs among the "at-risk" students and their parents is especially important. Apparently existing programs are not always actively offered as an alternative to the student population in question. On the other hand, the students in question often are directed into secondary vocational education, a program that can differ significantly from work-study programs. The nine secondary vocational education centers in Arkansas, however, in 1983-84 had a higher dropout rate than did the secondary schools covered in this study -- 11 percent[1/] compared to 8 percent. (Dropouts from vocational education centers, of course, do not necessarily also drop out of the home school.).

Making day care facilities available to young mothers is an obvious means of helping them to continue their education. In-school day care facilities could be used by the faculty as well as the students and perhaps could be integrated into the school's home economics and vocational training curriculum. In the main, however, in-school day care centers probably are not feasible. They are very expensive, require much supervision, and their appropriateness may be questionable, especially since they would cater to such a small segment of the student body. The school, however, might be able to work out arrangements for day care slots with programs such as Head Start and Title XX. Church day care centers may be willing to provide a few slots.

Another area, one that often is neglected, is enhancement of the home-school partnership. This relationship has the potential to optimize resources both in and outside of the school to achieve greater levels of learning.

One method of reducing school suspensions and expulsions is to insure that all teachers are trained in classroom management so that they do not use dismissals as a convenient and easy disciplinary tool. In order to identify those teachers who would benefit from additional training, records should be kept on the frequency the individual teachers employ such extreme techniques as suspensions and expulsions.

[1/] Prepared by Vocational and Technical Education Division of the Arkansas Department of Education.

School districts should be encouraged to develop plans that address the problems of expulsion, suspension, and dropouts. The efforts should be evaluated and those districts that prove successful should receive funds to continue and the plans should be disseminated to other school districts.

In brief, there is no lack of possibilities that can be tried in order to meet the dropout and dismissal problem. Individual schools or districts must have the latitude to develop efforts which most adequately address problems and needs specific to their student population. The involvement of parents, students, and other resource people is crucial for the successful planning, acceptance, and implementation of positive efforts regarding the problem. Frustrations will be many. Patience and forebearance are paramount. The most essential ingredient, however, is a sincere belief that something can be done and that the challenge is worth the expenditure of effort and funds.

School Dropouts and Dismissals

Part II: Alcohol and Drug Usage

33

Drug Use and School Dropouts and Dismissals: An Overview

Considerable interest has been shown in the last several years regarding the widespread and increasing use of illegal drugs by youth.

The attention paid to drug abuse has largely been associated with the physiological, psychological, and societal problems created by usage.

Drug abuse studies have primarily been confined to metropolitan areas because, until recently, drug abuse has tended to be considered an urban phenomenon.

Rural residents are thought to be more conservative and more traditional than urban residents; and young people in nonmetroplitan areas were believed to be less inclined to use drugs, given the opportunity, than their age peers in metropolitan areas. Thus, for a variety of reasons, rural areas have received relatively little systematic drug research attention.

Recent studies, however, have discovered a high incidence of drug use among rural high school students in Vermont, Ohio, and Texas. In addition, investigations involving rural-urban drug use tend to confirm the findings that rural rates of illegal drug use are converging with urban rates. Although it has become apparent that illicit drug use is prevalent in rural areas, still, there is relatively little known about the situation.

The paucity of information regarding school dropouts and their drug taking behavior is even greater. Information on the prevalence of drug use among youth is most commonly gathered through national surveys of high school students (most notably seniors) or in surveys initiated by a few states, in which the respondents, predominantly, are enrolled in school.

This section of the report delineates the process and outcome of an attempt to obtain a quantitative assessment of drug-related activity among a random sample of school dropouts. The commentary will address the following objectives:

a) Afford an overview of substance use among school dropouts and dismissals in a predominately rural setting.

b) Assess the incidence of substance usage among the study group.

c) Isolation of factors associated with frequency of usage.

d) Present a comparative analysis to existing data.

e) Provide recommendations.

Research Methodology

The central theme and concern of the research was to identify and assess the prevalence and frequency of drug related activity and other characteristics of secondary high school students who were currently, or had in the previous academic year been, identified as a school dropout or had been suspended/expelled. To accomplish this end, personal interviews were conducted with a random sample of this target population. The questionnaire (Appendix A) was structured in a similar fashion as those utilized in other areas of the country to obtain a base for possible comparative analysis. Topics for consideration were identified through a review of previous surveys, reports, articles, and publications of the study subject.

Beginning in the spring of 1984, staff was selected and trained and the effort to identify and contact those who had been randomly selected in each of the target school systems was initiated. Trained interviewers were instructed to contact potential participants, identify themselves, discuss why the survey was being conducted, and how the students had been selected. Interviewers also were given instructions to explain that they were not involved with any law enforcement or drug abuse agency.

Confidentiality and anonymity were assured regarding the contact, and interview respondents were also assured that no identifying numbers or marks would be placed on the questionnaires.

Efforts were directed toward creating a non-threatening environment that would encourage the respondents to tell the truth about their drug activities without fear of negative consequences.

Interviewers read the questionnaire to the participants; the total time per survey was approximately one hour. Interviews were held at a place and time convenient to the respondent, without others present.

Although problem areas exist with survey research in general and surveys on illegal topics in particular, attention was focused on minimizing these instances. The primary problem incurred was in locating the randomly selected respondents. In some of the target districts, several of the students selected had moved out of the area (this was particularly evident in one of the "urban" districts with a large minority student population).

A total of 204 interviews were conducted in 14 target communities across Arkansas. Seven communities had secondary school populations of less than 500, four with secondary populations between 500-1,000; and, three with more than 1,000. In selecting participating districts, primary consideration was given to geographic location and size of secondary school population.

Survey Results

Beliefs Regarding Community Drug/Alcohol Problem

Respondents were asked whether they believed the use of alcohol in the community was a problem, as well as if they thought their parent(s) believed the use of alcohol in the community was a problem.

Just under 80 percent of the respondents believed that alcohol use, at some level, was a problem in the community and 82 percent reported their parents had similar attitudes.

The respondents were also asked a similar question regarding the community's drug problem. The findings reveal that 60 percent of the respondents and 66 percent of the respondents' parents (as perceived by respondents) feel that drug use is a moderate to serious problem.

The findings shown in Figures 1 and 2 reveal that a majority of the respondents think that both alcohol and drug use is a community problem. The respondents also believe that their parents view these issues as a problem for the local community.

Figure 1

RESPONDENTS' ATTITUDE (*AND PERCEPTION OF PARENTAL ATTITUDE*) ABOUT EXTENT OF COMMUNITY **ALCOHOL** PROBLEM

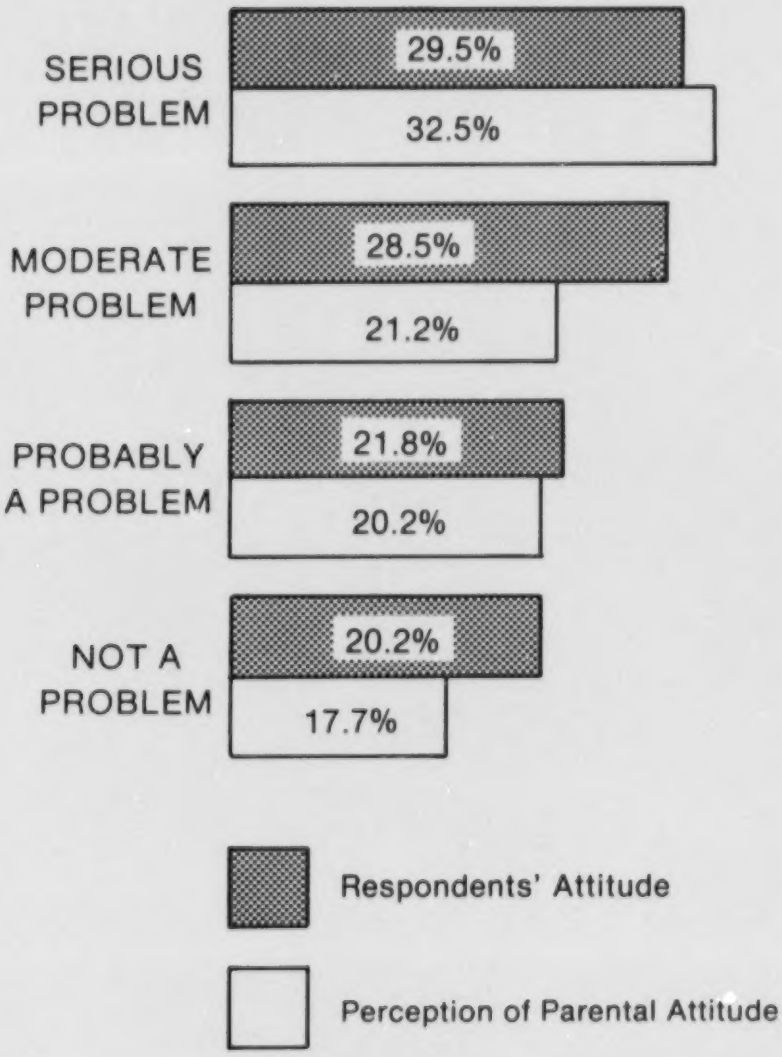
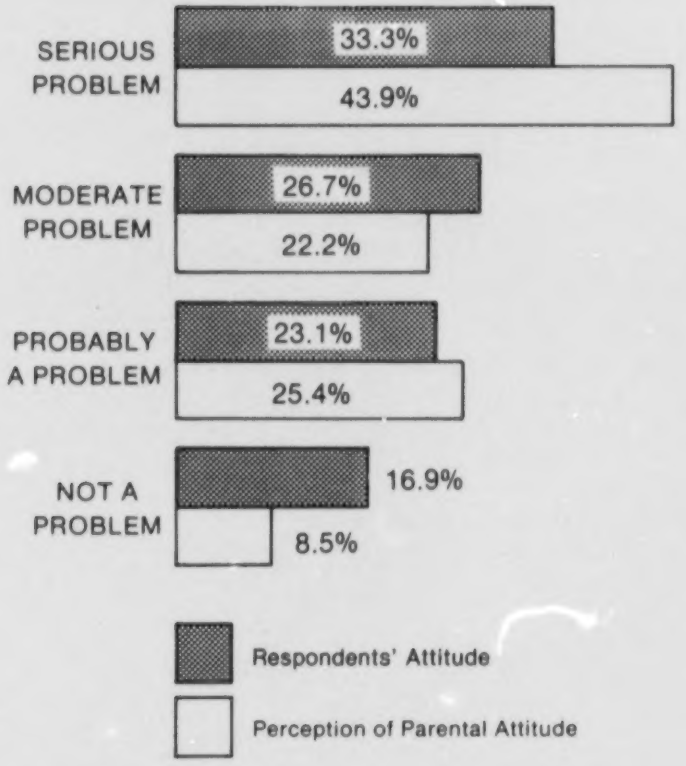


Figure 2

RESPONDENTS' ATTITUDE *(AND PERCEPTION OF PARENTAL ATTITUDE)* ABOUT EXTENT OF COMMUNITY **DRUG** PROBLEM



Patterns of Drug Use

A series of questions were presented to evaluate the extent of the respondents' drug use. The respondents were asked if they use drugs "almost every day", "several times a week", "a few times a month", "a few times a year", "only once or twice ever", or "never have tried".

The substances in order of frequency of use are: cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana, amphetamines, hashish, opiates, inhalents, tranquilizers, cocaine, hallucinogens, and heroin.

Information in Table 1 illustrates the number of respondents who used drugs within specific time periods while out of school. As shown, alcohol, cigarettes and marijuana are the most widely used drugs. Table 2 gives the usage factor of each substance prior to leaving school by the same respondents.

Almost 37% of the respondents reported using alcohol at least several times a week while out of school, with 8.4 percent reporting consumption almost daily. The information yielded these results on usage after leaving school:

*84.1 percent of the respondents reported they use alcohol at least a few times a year. 7.4 percent had never tried alcohol.

*70.8 percent used cigarettes/tobacco at least a few times a month and 59.9 percent use them daily. 17.3 percent had never tried cigarettes/tobacco.

*74.3 percent had smoked marijuana at least once and 34.7 percent use marijuana almost daily to several times a week. 25.7 percent had never tried marijuana.

*40.6 percent had used amphetamines at least once and 4.5 percent use amphetamines almost daily. 59.4 percent had never tried amphetamines.

*Hard drug usage was clearly limited, with 1.0 percent indicating they had experimented with heroin and 18.3 percent with cocaine.

Table 1

FREQUENCY OF DRUG USE
(out-of-school)

Substance	Almost Every Day	Several Times A Week	A Few Times A Month	Have Ever Tried	Have Never Tried
Alcohol	17	57	54	59	15
Cigarettes	121	14	8	24	35
Marijuana	25	45	35	45	52
Hashish	2	5	20	35	140
Cocaine	1	1	9	25	165
Amphetamines	9	13	18	42	120
Barbituates	3	3	8	21	167
Tranquilizers	2	1	7	16	176
Hallucinogens	0	1	5	12	184
Opiates	0	2	4	22	174
Inhalants	2	3	0	20	177
Heroin	0	0	2	1	199

Table 2

FREQUENCY OF DRUG USE
(IN SCHOOL)

Substance	Almost Every Day	Several Times A Week	A Few Times a Month	Have Ever Tried	Have Never Tried
Alcohol	16	49	53	55	23
Cigarettes	105	16	10	25	39
Marijuana	21	48	33	36	58
Hashish	2	5	19	28	141
Cocaine	0	1	11	20	164
Amphetamines	10	14	14	35	123
Barbituates	2	4	2	21	167
Tranquilizers	2	2	4	15	173
Hallucinogens	0	0	4	6	186
Opiates	1	2	2	17	174
Inhalants	1	3	0	17	175
Heroin	0	0	1	0	195

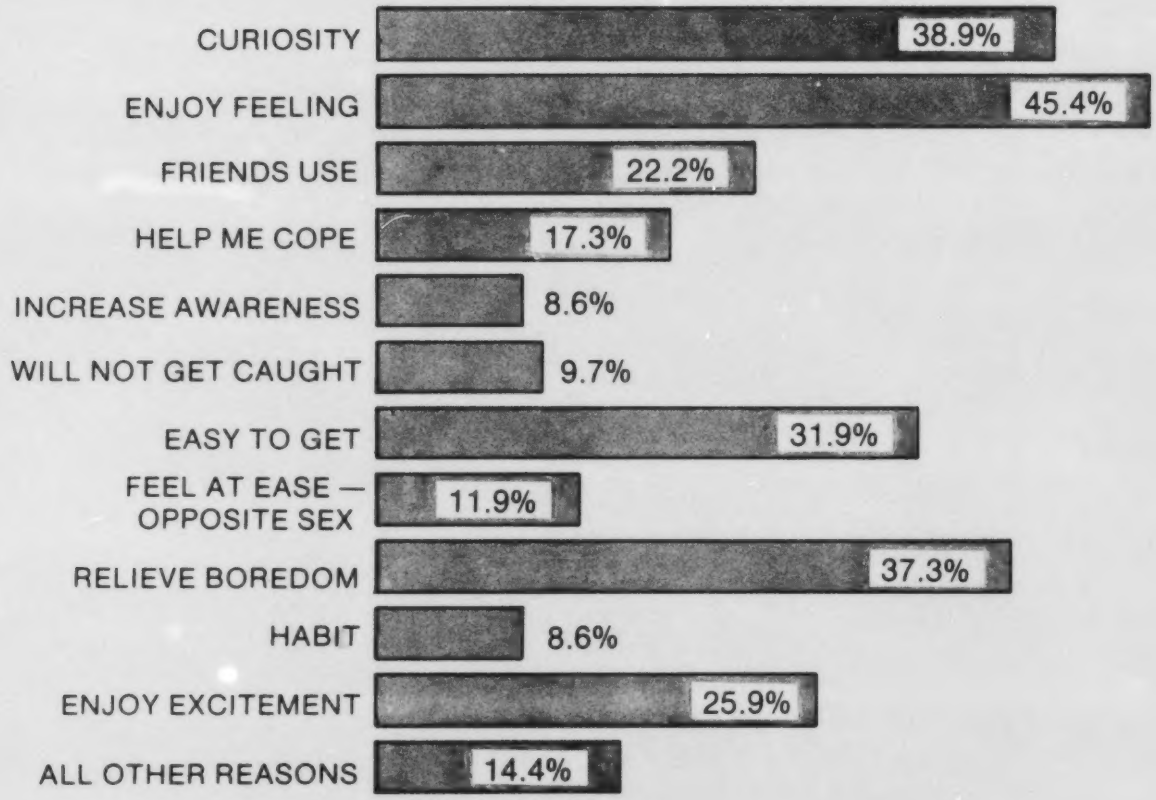
The finding that almost 35 percent of the respondents smoked marijuana either daily or several times a week and almost 37 percent consumed alcohol at the same rate is somewhat surprising, even given the widespread popularity marijuana and alcohol have among young people.

Reasons for Using Drugs

It is imperative that prevention/intervention efforts take into account the reasons why young people use drugs. Programs designed to address drug usage among young people based on findings that focus on specific reasons for drug use may be more effective than those with generalized approaches. In addition, the effectiveness of a program is often dependent upon the young person's perception of its overall credibility and relevancy. In order to better understand why young people use drugs, another series of questions was designed to solicit the respondents' reasons for doing so. The results are presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3

REASONS FOR USING DRUGS*—



*Percentages do not equal 100.0% because of Multiple responses.

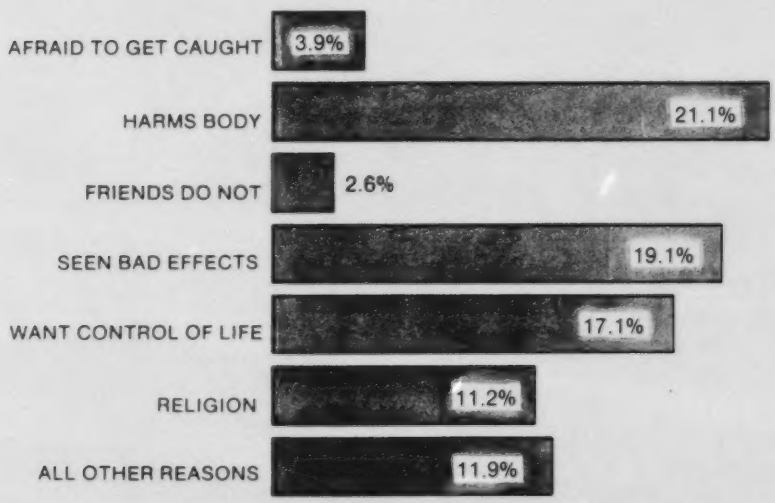
The respondents revealed a diverse range of reasons for using drugs. This is not particularly surprising given the complex nature of drug abuse. The major reason respondents gave for using drugs, however, was the enjoyment of feelings they received from it. The next highest reason given for drug use was curiosity. Relieving boredom and the ease of getting drugs were third and fourth. Individuals in this survey who use drugs are, it would seem, attempting to find out what it feels like to use drugs, have some excitement or fun, or perhaps to escape, and are facilitated in this through the relative ease with which they can secure drugs.

The commonly held belief that peer pressure plays a significant role in drug involvement is not borne out by the results of this particular survey. "Friends using","to feel accepted", and "feeling at ease with others" were among the less significant reasons for using drugs given by respondents. It must be stated, however, that the need for peer approval may promote certain behaviors--such as drug usage--without the participant ever being consciously aware of this subtle reinforcer.

To further explore the issue of factors associated with drug taking behavior, non-user respondents were asked why they did not use drugs (Figure 4). The data reflects that the primary reason was the potential harmful effects upon a person's body. In addition, having seen the bad effects drugs have had on others, and the desire to be in control of one's life were highly motivational in not using drugs.

Figure 4

REASONS FOR NOT USING DRUGS*



* Percentages do not equal 100.0% because of multiple responses

A minute percentage indicated they did not use drugs because their friends did not. This information may be particularly relevant in that in a similar survey conducted in another southern state (Georgia) the identical order of reasons surfaced.

Successful education/prevention efforts might do well to significantly incorporate the concerns about health factors, i.e. physical and psychological effects of drug abuse, into their strategies directed toward youth.

Most Usual Place of Drug Use

Discovering where young people use substances may help us gain some clue to developing workable alternatives to induce youth, particularly those out of school, to refrain from using drugs. Respondents were asked to indicate where they most usually involved themselves in drug taking.

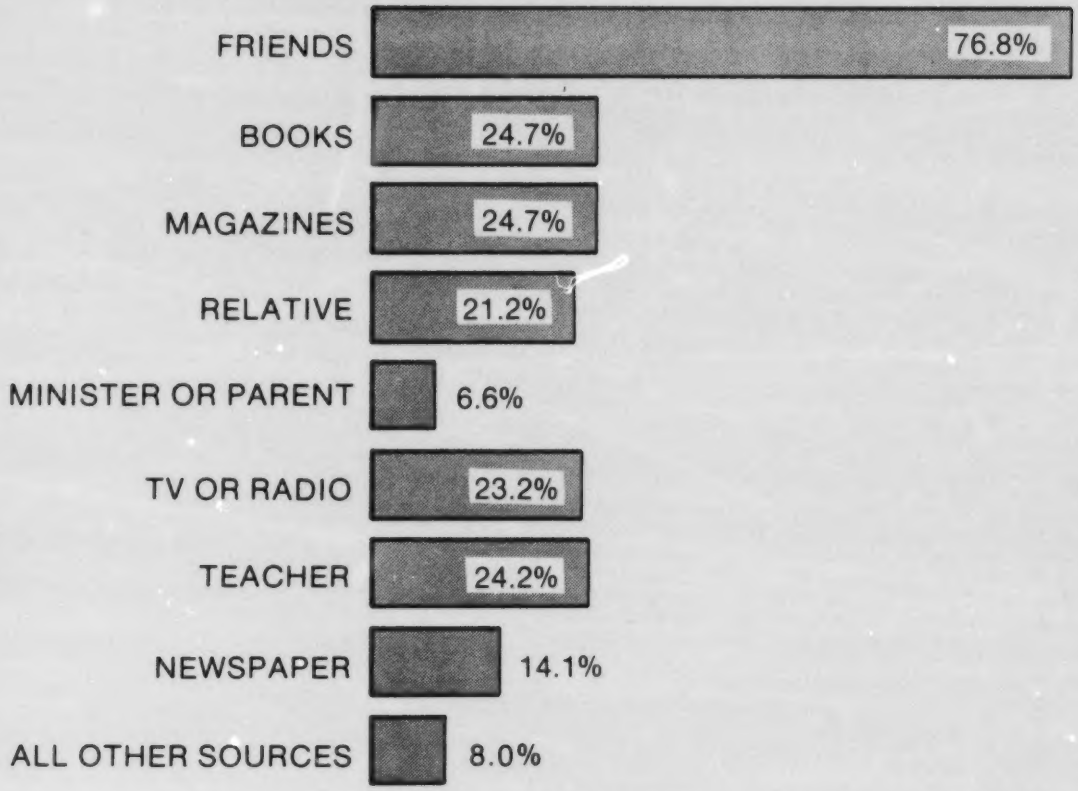
Friend's houses surface as the most popular place for consumption of alcohol, marijuana, and amphetamines for this population segment. Social gatherings were the next most popular places for using alcohol and marijuana, with school being the second most popular for amphetamine usage. Cars proved to be the third most likely place to consume alcohol and marijuana. School and work tended to be the least likely of places in which to use drugs, perhaps due to the level of supervision usually apparent in these areas. The finding that drug and alcohol use frequently takes place in cars may not be surprising, but reinforces the concern of greater potential for accidents. Also, the findings suggest that inadequate supervision is afforded when youth are at home. For the student out of school, this is particularly apparent. Being out of school in a society where one or both parents work during the day provides a great deal of time and latitude for these children to be involved in activities unavailable or less likely in the confines of the school.

Drug Information Sources

Drug information sources are very important in education and prevention efforts. In order to more clearly determine what information sources young people are currently using, respondents were asked to relate where they received most of the information they know about drugs. Many gave multiple sources. The results are presented in Figure 5.

Figure 5

SOURCES OF DRUG INFORMATION*



* Percentages do not equal 100.0% because of multiple responses.

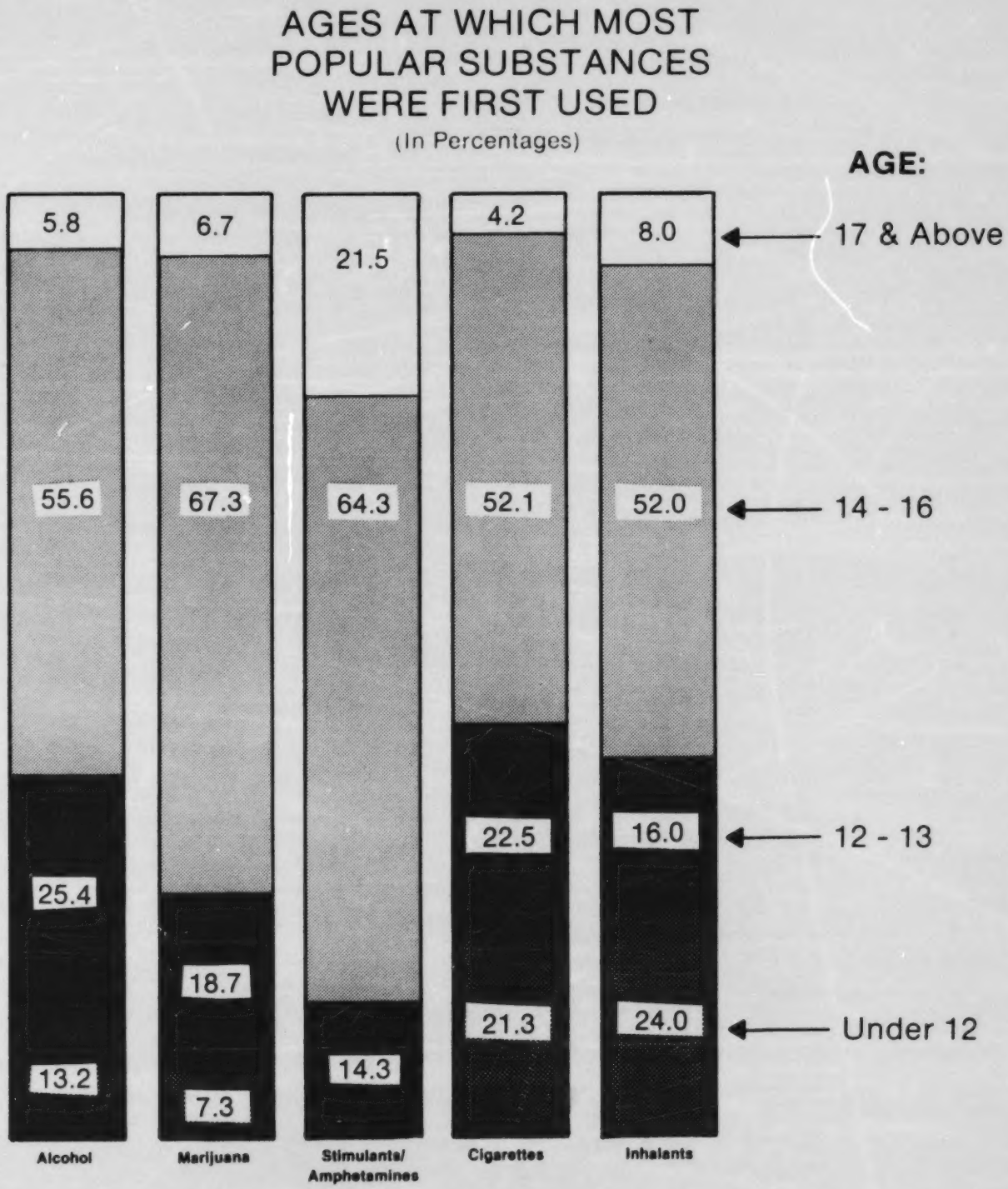
The findings reveal that young people receive drug-related information from a myriad of sources, but friends clearly appear as the primary source of information. In addition, television and radio, books, magazines, and teachers also function as preferred drug information sources. Among this survey group, drug education programs were negligible as information sources. Relatives, parents, and ministers are also utilized as sources for drug information but to a much lesser extent.

Consequently, strategies to address drug problems among young people should consider attending to the peer communication networks that young people rely upon for much of their drug information. Programs designed to provide drug information and education, may, in fact, increase their effectiveness by utilizing these existing communication channels.

Age and First Use Patterns

Information in this section focuses on the age of respondents and their first use experience. Figure 6 reflects the percentage breakdown of the four most popular substances (alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and amphetamines) by age of first use. Also shown is the age most predominant for first usage of inhalants.

Figure 6



Information gathered shows that 13.2 percent of respondents who had tried alcohol first used it before their 12th birthday. While 25.4 percent first used alcohol at ages 12 and 13, about 56 percent were 14, 15, and 16. This reflects a total of 81 percent of the respondents first using alcohol between ages 12 and 16, while 5.8 percent did not experience alcohol use until age 17 or later.

First experimentation with marijuana follows much the same pattern of age distribution. 67.3 percent of respondents who had tried marijuana had first done so at age 14, 15, or 16; 12 percent first tried it at age 13. The composite reflects a total of 79.3 percent who had first tried marijuana between ages 13-16. 14.1 percent first used it by age 12, while 6.7 percent were 17 or older before their first use episode.

The pattern for tobacco consumption corresponds with the previous patterns regarding age distribution. 21.2 percent of the sample had used tobacco prior to age 12; 52.1 percent of the survey participants had first used tobacco at ages 14, 15, or 16; 43.7 percent first tried it prior to age 14, while 4.2 percent were 17 or older at first use.

Again, ages 14, 15 and 16 were the predominant years for the first use of amphetamines. 64.3 percent of those who had tried amphetamines had first done so in these ages. 14.3 percent tried prior to age 14, and 21.5 percent at age 17 or older.

Even though inhalant usage did not surface as one of the favored substances to be used, data is presented since it reflects the common belief that its usage is predominant among younger children. Information shows that 24.0 percent of those using inhalants had done so prior to age 12; 16.0 percent by ages 12-13; and over one-half by age 14 to 16.

Data from this survey population would seem to indicate that education/prevention efforts must be initiated early, most feasibly during elementary school-age years. Intervention efforts as opposed to prevention might, in light of the survey results, have the greatest potential for impact during junior high and early high school ages. It should be understood that prevention strategies based on sound, factual evidence regarding drugs and utilizing the informal peer communication network should be pervasive across all ages and efforts, particularly in school-based endeavors.

Related Points of Survey Data

The following points of information, as earlier reflected in Part I, should serve to expand the data base established through this survey. It is hoped this will confirm pertinent issues to be taken into account in future planning efforts to develop more directed endeavors regarding drug abuse issues related to youth, in particular, those in the growing numbers of children out of school.

Self-Concept. When asked to evaluate their feelings of their own value or significance, 57.8 percent of the respondents had some doubt regarding their worth and replied that they felt "not very valuable" or only "somewhat valuable", while 34.8 percent of the respondents stated that they felt "very valuable" as a person.

Marital Status of Parents. 60 percent of the survey participants were living in single-parent families.

Get Along with Parents. 83.9 percent of the respondents described getting along with their parents as ranging from average to very well, 44.5 percent who had stepparent(s) fell within the same range (average - very well). Finally, 93.7 percent perceive that their parents got along with each other in a range from average to very well.

Receive Public Assistance. 33 percent of the respondents stated that they or their parents received some form of public assistance.

Parents Employed (two-parent families). In 63.6 percent of these families, both mother and father worked. 3.3 percent stated that both parents were unemployed; 25.6 percent had fathers not employed and 7.4 percent had mothers not employed.

Parent Employed (single-parent families). 51.4 percent stated that their parent was not working at the time of the survey.

Ease In Obtaining Drugs. 79 percent who use drugs felt that it was easy to obtain the drugs they wanted.

Ever Sold Drugs. Almost 20 percent of the respondents revealed that they had sold drugs at some point.

Sources of Help for A Friend. Participants were asked where they would first go to seek help for someone they really cared for who had a drug problem. 28.5 percent responded that they would not seek outside help or would

not know how to seek help. 23.2 percent stated they would go to a drug counselor, 19.0 percent would go to a friend, 14.3 percent said they would go to someone in the medical professions. Others, generally thought of as helping-professionals (clergy, social workers, teachers) were selected by only 3.5 percent of the respondents. All other sources account for about 11 percent.

Parents Aware of Drug Taking. Over 74 percent of the respondents who used drugs thought their parents were aware of the activity.

Discuss Drugs with Parents. 33 percent of the survey participants stated that they had never talked with their parents about drug use/abuse issues. Despite the fact that almost 75 percent of the respondents who took drugs think parents knew of their drug-taking behavior, more than 58 percent of them had never discussed drugs with a parent or had done so only once or twice.

Family Income. 58.8 percent perceived their family's income as average or above in comparison to others in the community in which they lived.

Religious Scale. 41.4 percent of the respondents identified themselves as average or above in their religiosity, while over 58 percent considered themselves to be less than average to not at all religious.

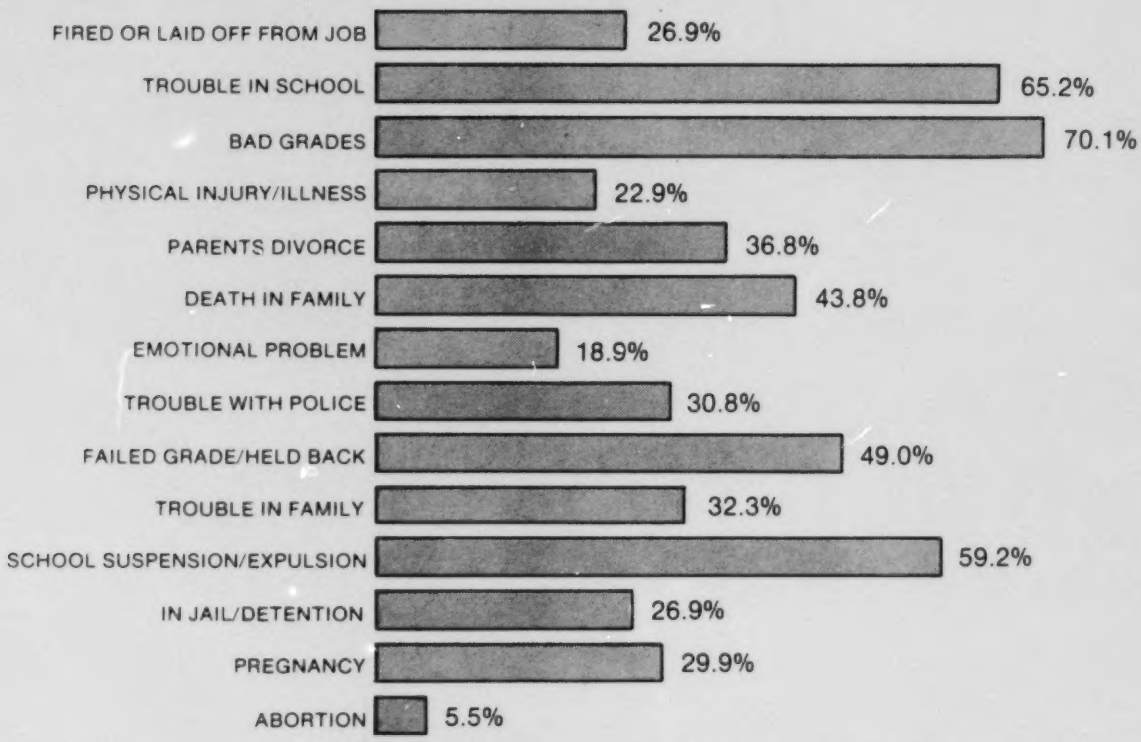
Certain Life Experiences. In seeking to inventory certain life happenings which the respondent population had experienced, a series of questions was developed to ascertain certain stress provoking situations they had experienced. (Figure 7).

Just over 70 percent of the participants had gotten bad grades (D's and/or F's) at some point in their senior high career; over 65 percent had experienced trouble in school, over 59 percent had been suspended from school and almost half had failed a grade. It is readily apparent that a large number of these youth who were, or had been, out of school experienced negative events directly associated with that institution. Further scrutiny of Figure 8 reveals that many of the children were chronically involved in situations with a high stress relation. This, reasonably, could indicate the need for early identification and intervention efforts which might serve in the development of more appropriate coping skills as well as the provision of necessary services for this population segment.

Figure 7

LIFE EXPERIENCES

(Percent Affected)



* Percentages do not equal 100.0% because of multiple responses

Employment. 27.4 percent of the respondent population were employed in either occasional or part-time jobs, while 19.6 percent held full-time jobs. 37.4 percent of those working held generally lower paying jobs such as restaurant/fast foods, baby sitting, and odd jobs.

Parents Drinking Behavior. When asked about parental drinking behavior, 61.7 percent responded that a parent or stepparent drank. Almost 20 percent felt that one or both parents had a problem with alcohol and/or drugs.

Perceptual Responses. In an attempt to discover how members of the survey population may perceive the world around them, the implied issue of control of their lives, and orientation to interactions with others, a series of statements was developed to inventory perceptions. A composite of responses is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

RESPONDENTS' VIEWS AND PERCEPTIONS
(IN PERCENTAGES)

	Agree	Don't Know or Undecided	Disagree
A person is foolish to keep on going to school if he/she can get a job right away.	17.6	10.3	72.0
I have little influence over the things that happen to me.	17.6	10.3	72.1
These days a person doesn't know whom he/she can count on.	49.1	20.5	30.4
It is not always wise to plan too far ahead because many things turn out to be a matter of luck anyway.	49.0	16.6	34.3
Most people really don't care what happens to the other fellow.	42.6	13.7	43.7
I feel that I don't have enough control over the direction my life is taking.	18.5	13.0	68.5
Money is the most important thing in life.	13.8	7.3	78.9
School officials aren't really interested in the average student.	36.8	14.2	49.0
Who gets ahead in life often depends on who was lucky enough to be in the right place first.	30.4	21.5	48.1
Many times I decide what to do because my friends are doing it.	24.6	5.3	70.1
To make money there are no right and wrong ways anymore, only easy and hard ways.	28.0	8.3	63.7

Comparison of Rates to National/Regional Data

It may prove beneficial to compare data on patterns of usage of those out of school in Arkansas to existing information of a similar nature available on larger segments of the youth (12-19 years) population (Table 4). Sources used to secure data for the comparison include: Gallup Poll Youth Survey (November 1983 - January 1984); National Survey on Drug Abuse, National Household Survey (NIDA, 1982); Student Drug Use in America (University of Michigan Institute for Social Research, 1982); Patterns of Rural Teenage Drug and Alcohol Abuse (Cooperative Extension Service/University of Georgia, 1981).

As illustrated in Table 4, the sample population (of Arkansas' school dropouts) are generally commpatible in substance usage involvement with those of the national subgroup of high school seniors. Two points of marked difference are that the dropout sample contains a substantially greater number of those who have "ever used" marijuana and, also, larger numbers who have "ever used" cigarettes/tobacco.

Table 4

COMPARISON OF OTHER SURVEY DATA (IN PERCENTAGES)

Substance/Use	Arkansas Dropouts Survey	Georgia High School Survey	National Seniors Survey	National Household Survey
ALCOHOL:				
Within month	63.1	39.0	70.0	26.9
Within year	12.8	8.4	87.0	20.4
Have ever used	92.6	76.9	93.0	65.2
Never used	7.4	23.1	7.0	34.8
CIGARETTES:				
Within month	69.3	27.0	30.0	14.7
Within year	4.5	8.3	-	10.2
Have ever used	83.2	63.3	70.0	49.5
Never used	16.8	36.7	30.0	50.5
MARIJUANA:				
Within month	44.9	22.2	29.0	11.5
Within year	12.8	6.2	44.0	9.1
Have ever used	73.4	42.2	59.0	26.7
Never used	26.6	57.8	41.0	73.3
STIMULANTS/AMPHETAMINES:				
Within month	11.9	7.5	14.0	2.6
Within year	18.8	4.3	26.0	3.0
Have ever used	41.6	16.2	36.0	6.7
Never used	58.4	83.8	64.0	93.3
BARBITUATES/SEDATIVES:				
Within month	2.5	5.5	3.0	1.3
Within year	7.9	3.3	9.0	2.4
Have ever used	16.2	12.3	15.0	5.8
Never used	83.8	87.7	85.0	94.2
TRANQUILIZERS:				
Within month	2.0	-	2.0	0.9
Within year	6.9	-	7.0	2.4
Have ever used	13.3	-	14.0	4.9
Never used	86.7	-	86.0	95.1

- continued -

Table 4

COMPARISON OF OTHER SURVEY DATA — Continued

Substance/Use	Arkansas Dropouts Survey	Georgia High School Survey	National Seniors Survey	National Household Survey
HALLUCINOGENS:				
Within month	1.0	-	4.0	1.3
Within year	3.9	-	9.0	2.2
Have ever used	8.4	-	15.0	5.1
Never used	91.6	-	85.0	94.9
OPIATES:				
Within month	1.5	2.5	2.0	-
Within year	5.9	2.7	5.0	-
Have ever used	14.8	9.2	10.0	-
Never used	85.2	90.8	90.0	-
COCAINE:				
Within month	4.5	1.7	5.0	1.6
Within year	7.4	2.0	12.0	2.4
Have ever used	18.3	6.7	16.0	6.5
Never used	81.7	93.3	84.0	93.5

Relationship Between Use of Controlled Substances and School Dropouts and Dismissals

Approximately 9 out of 10 students who dropped out of school or were asked to leave had used or at least experimented with a controlled substance, with most using more than one substance. Alcohol and marijuana were by far the most popular substances. The survey suggests that students who were suspended or expelled from school were heavier users of controlled substances than were the students who dropped out of school on their own, although causal relationships can not be established.

Reasons that lead youth to use controlled substances often are complex and interrelated, as are the impact and consequences derived from their use. A causal relationship between the use of drugs and alcohol and the act of dropping out of school or being forced to leave can not be established with precision statistically. Although a direct question on the relationship between use of controlled substances and school departures was not asked, returns from both the schools and the personal interviews related drug incidents to students' departures in fewer than 10 instances. Inferred relationships are possible, however.

According to the survey, about 4 percent of the dropouts and dismissed students had never tried alcohol, drugs, nor even cigarettes before they left or were asked to leave school. Another 5 percent had tried only cigarettes but not alcohol nor drugs. Thus, about 10 percent of the respondents had used neither drugs nor alcohol, even at an experimental level. Most respondents had used drugs, alcohol, or both. About 75 percent of this group had used both; 20 percent had used alcohol only, no drugs; and the remaining dropouts and dismissals had used drugs only.

Based on the controlled substance most frequently used by each user (cigarettes excluded), approximately half of the users were heavy consumers, using drugs or alcohol from several times a week up to as often as every day. For roughly a fourth of the users, consumption of controlled substances did not exceed a few times a months. The frequency of use by the other fourth ranged from once or twice ever to a few times a year.

The following tabulation lists various controlled substances and the percentage of students who used each almost every day, several times a week, or a few times a month. Again, for multi-substance users, the substance most frequently used was the one selected for the calculation.

Percentage Distribution of Students by Substance Used at Least Bi-monthly

Alcohol	60.2	Barbituates	4.0
Marijuana	52.0	Tranquilizers	4.0
Amphetamines	19.3	Opiates	2.5
Hashish	13.3	Hallucinogens	2.0
Cocaine	6.1	Inhalants	2.0
		Heroin	.5

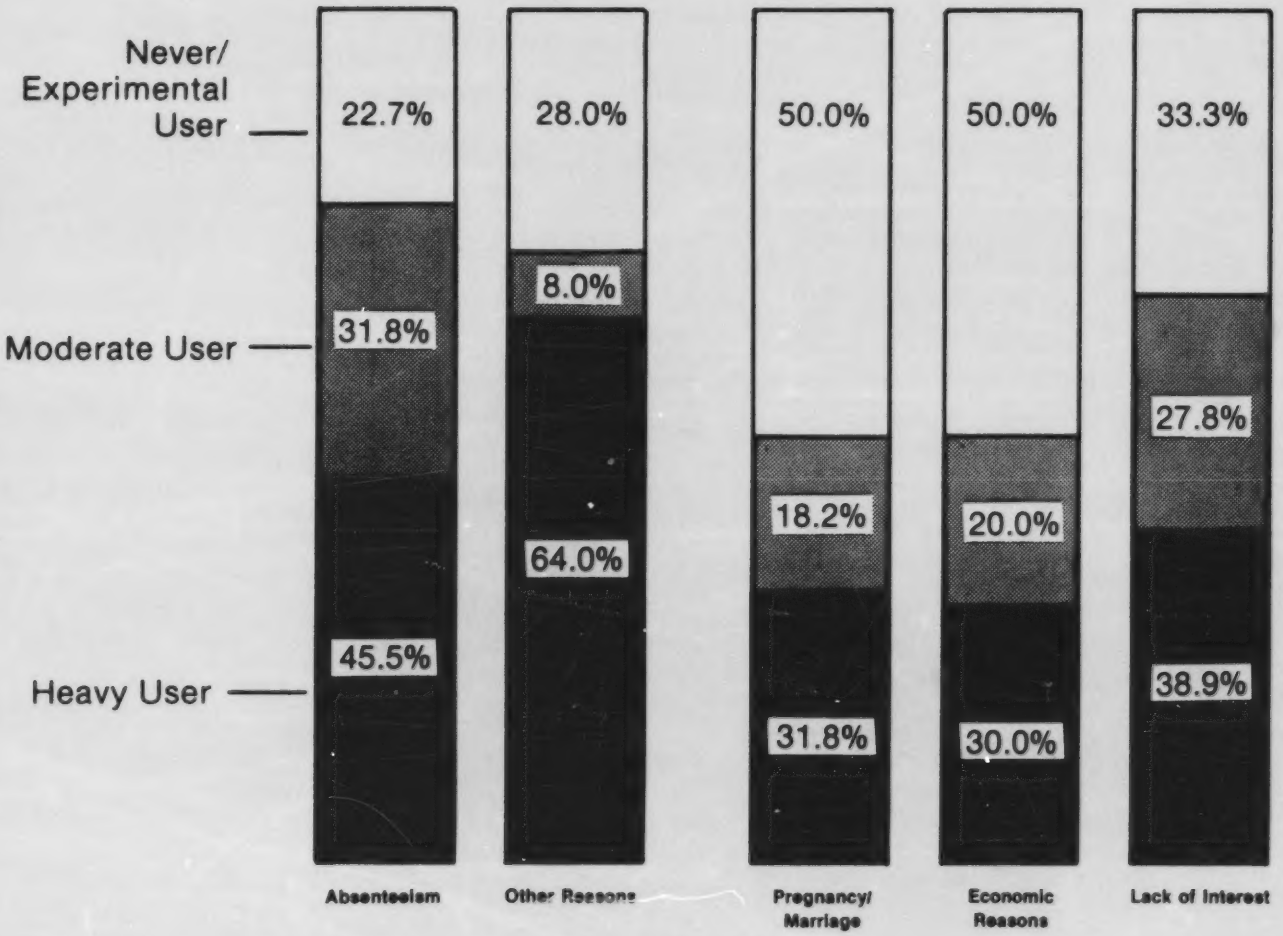
Alcohol and marijuana were by far the most popular substances. Regardless of whether or not the students used more than one substance, 60 percent of them used alcohol a minimum of a few times a month and over 50 percent used marijuana at this rate. Only 4 percent used barbituates and tranquilizers as often and even fewer used hallucinogens, opiates, inhalants or heroin.

Figure 8 shows for each major reason for student departure from school the frequency with which the students used controlled substances. "Heavy" refers to use of at least one substance almost every day or several times a week; "moderate" refers to use a few times a month; "never/experimented" refers to no use, use once or twice, or use a few times a year.

According to this classification, students expelled or suspended for reasons other than absenteeism were the most frequent users of controlled substances. Almost two-thirds of them used drugs or alcohol several times a week or more often. Approximately 45 percent of the students dismissed for excessive absences were heavy users. Students who dropped out of school because of pregnancy, marriage, or for economic reasons were the least frequent users of drugs and alcohol with half of each category either never using controlled substances or using them only at an experimental level.

Figure 8

FREQUENCY OF USE BY MAJOR REASONS FOR DROPOUTS & DISMISSALS



DISMISSALS — DROPOUTS

Summary of Survey Findings

In summary, the survey given to youth, grades 9 - 12 who were, or had been out of school during the 1983-84 school year revealed the following points:

*Drug and alcohol use for this specific population segment is higher than the national average for all youth and is greater than rates for youth in a corresponding southern state, Georgia, which surveyed a target group of high school students with a very similar instrument.

*A majority of the participants thought that both alcohol and drug use was a problem in their community.

*92.5 percent of the respondents had tried alcohol at least once prior to the interview with 36.6 percent currently using alcohol almost daily to several times a week.

*74.3 percent had tried marijuana at least once prior to the interview with 34.7 percent currently using marijuana almost daily to several times a week.

*Almost 60 percent were currently using cigarettes/tobacco daily.

*40.6 percent indicated they had used amphetamines at least once prior to the interview.

*Of those who used alcohol, 55.6 percent had done so by age 16; 67.3 percent of those usirg marijuana had done so by age 16.

*Just over 70 percent of the participants had received failing or near failing grades at some time, while nearly 60 percent had at some time been suspended from school, and almost half had failed a grade.

*Major reasons given for using drugs were enjoyment of feelings, curiosity, and relieving boredom.

*Primary reasons given for not using drugs included potential harmful physical/psychological effects and having seen effects drugs have had on others.

*The most usual places to use drugs/alcohol were friends' houses, social gatherings, and cars.

*Most common source of drug information was friends.

*Drug counselors were shown to be the preferred source of help with drug problems, if outside help was sought.

*Almost 80 percent felt drugs were easy to obtain.

*Nearly 58 percent felt some degree of doubt about their value or significance as a person.

*33 percent never discussed drug issues with parents, although the overwhelming majority believe their parents know of their drug-taking behavior.

*Almost 20 percent felt that one or both parents had a drug/alcohol problem.

*13.2 percent first used alcohol by age 12; just over 14 percent first used marijuana by age 12 and more than 21 percent had first tried cigarettes/tobacco by that age.

General Recommendations

This effort was intended to provide a practical overview of the nature and scope of drug use by school dropouts. Research indicates that drug use among the young appears to be leveling off for the first time since the early 1970's. Rural teenage drug use, however, seems to have not leveled off and is still increasing.

As part of the overall project objectives, this section presents recommendations which decision-makers and others may consider when developing ways of attending to the issue of drug use, particularly as it relates to intervention, education, and prevention.

Keeping the Issue of Drug Abuse Before the Public

The problem of drug abuse is not a recent development. Media attention, however, frequently presents it in a sensational manner. It is extremely difficult to keep a single senational issue before the public for any length of time. Once the media attention fades, the situation may, in fact, become normalized and create difficulty in maintaining the public's interest as well as support for programs that require long-term commitment and considerable resources.

Education

Educational programs must be developed to meet the needs of particular audiences; such should be designed to provide factual information in an honest, persuasive manner. This is especially true in regard to young people because they are receiving drug information (as the survey reflects) from a variety of sources. Innovative approaches must be used to present the information. These approaches should be tailored to different age groups who have, naturally, different comprehension levels and attention spans. Emphasis should be given to the physical and mental health dangers of drug abuse since these factors surfaced as important reasons for not using drugs.

Drug education programs must also broaden the base of their information sources. This objective may be achieved by incorporating as many different aspects of drug awareness into prevention programs as possible. This includes the physiological, psychological, sociological , cultural, religious, legal, and moral implications and aspects of illicit drug use. By broadening the information base, drug education programs will become more comprehensive, and appeal to the interest of a larger number of people. It is hoped that the greater the interest, the greater the support.

Although the survey results indicated that friends and various media were frequently used as drug information sources, it might prove wise to enlist a wide variety of resources for drug information presentations. Drug education groups should also recognize that young people are frequently a source of considerable pride to the general community. Recognition of their abilities, hard work, and involvement should be included as an integral part of any drug awareness effort. In this way, drug prevention groups become involved with positive aspects of a community and cease to be associated with negative areas.

Development of Drug Education in the Local School System

Local school officials are frequently very knowledgeable about the issues associated with adolescent drug use. School board members and administrators appear to be committed to the value of drug education. It must become an accepted part of the school curriculum.

This goal can be more broadly achieved if local citizens notify school boards and administrators that they support incorporating drug abuse education into the existing curriculum. An anticipated outcome of this action would be to create working relationships with school officials and interested citizens so that meaningful drug education efforts can be developed and implemented in the school system.

Obviously, schools are not the cause of substance abuse problems and should not be solely responsible for addressing the issue. However, research idicates that schools are one of the most appropriate and effective places to attend to this effort.

The goals of an effective drug education program seem clear: to help young people learn to make sound and reasonable decisions--not only about substance usage, but about many decisions one is faced with while growing up; to help them develop refusal ("saying no") skills; to provide assistance in developing communication skills. Additionally, an effective program must not only provide information, but the skills and insights necessary to act on this information.

Because of the different needs and problems to be addressed, the approach to education and prevention must necessarily vary. Accepting the premise that education is a necessity, the following are suggested avenues to be taken to accomplish this fundamental need within the education system:

Education programs which address the responsible, intelligent use or nonuse of drugs, enhance individual self-concept, and provide viable alternatives to drug use must begin at the elementary school level. Logically, classroom teachers should be trained to implement such a program within the curriculum. Availability of such training currently exists and has been implemented in a number of systems; this effort must be expanded to include all elementary schools.

Comprehensive health education programs, in both the elementary and secondary schools, which increase the students' knowledge about their own health, together with the development of basic life skills, may offer the greatest potential on a long-term basis. Such programs emphasize the development and enhancement of healthy, constructive lifestyles. Many effective curricula and materials are available for the planning and implementation of such efforts.

School-based positive peer influence programs which incorporate "saying no" elements have proven to be very effective, particularly on elementary and junior high school levels. These programs utilize peers to provide help for students having questions, problems, socialization difficulty, and concerns related to peer pressure.

Clearly written school policies regarding use and possession of substances, curricula, referrals, and a variety of other points are critical. Parents, school staff and officials, students, law enforcement and juvenile court representatives, and drug/alcohol professionals should be involved in the development of such policies to ensure their being the most effective and appropriate possible. Realistic drug and alcohol policies should be coupled with effective prevention and early intervention programs. Rules and policies alone will not eliminate drug and alcohol abuse. School policies and local programs should be mutually supportive and reinforcing. To facilitate the greatest effectiveness, schools must develop proactive as well as reactive measures to address the many facets of the substance abuse issue.

Exemplary substance education programs will increase awareness of the issues surrounding the use and abuse of drugs. Successful prevention programs encourage students, parents, and members of the community in thinking about alcohol and drugs. This encourages people to become more open to talking about these issues and problems.

A potential result of any awareness program is the surfacing of alcohol and drug problems among participants. Students are encouraged to admit and confront the possibility that they have such problems; participating students whose parents have drinking problems may be more willing to seek help in coping with this stressful family situation; techers, parents, and other members of the community may also become more willing to confront alcohol and other drug problems which affect them, their families, or friends.

An important issue to be addressed in designing a prevention/education program is what to do when these problems surface, particularly within the school. The reality is that education/prevention alone may not be enough. For this reason, early intervention programs are a necessary part of any comprehensive school-based effort. Currently, Early Intervention Programs exist in a large number of communities in the state. These programs are capable of serving intervention needs of youth, parents, and adult populations and could be incorporated into existing or planned school-based efforts.

A viable method for reducing the costs of such programs is for a group of schools in a particular geographic area to form a consortium or cooperative to share both the costs and services. This method has been effective in addressing other needs of the smaller, rural schools and could feasibly be used to provide drug education.

Parent Involvement

The parents of young people should also be targeted for education efforts. Parents require background information on drugs so they can knowledgeably interact with their children about the potential dangers of drug use. If young people recognize that their parents possess factual, current information about drugs and their effects, they may rely more on them for drug information. Through these education efforts, parents not only learn about drugs and alcohol, but may also become familiar with strategies which enable parents and children to communicate more effectively. Consequently, parents may become more involved in issues confronting their own families, as well as influential participants in community and school-based prevention and education efforts.

Developing Community Approach Linkages

Developing community linkages involves actively seeking the help and cooperation of other established local groups, organizations and individuals in the process of developing means of addressing drug abuse issues.

Linkages are developed in many different ways. For example, citizen action groups interested in drug education/prevention might align themselves with recreation-oriented groups to broaden the potential of creative, supervised recreational activities as a viable alternative to drug use.

Linkage and involvement need not be limited to the local community. Working with other communities who have developed successful programs can prove very useful in gaining insight into what may be accomplished, as well as problem areas which might be avoided. A number of resource agencies exist within the state and nationally which can be tapped for necessary assistance and information. Although one community's endeavors may not duplicate those of another, learning from the experiences of others may facilitate the planning of new efforts.

Examples of mutual cooperation and benefit are numerous. The important point is that the help and cooperation of community groups can maximize efforts, lend support, provide expertise, and help drug education and prevention efforts become more rapidly and readily accepted and diffused into the local community.

Integrated Services

The precipitating factors of drug use transverse established social institutions and aspects of human services. It is not simply a problem of poverty, poor mental health, family breakdown or education. It is all of this and more. One single agency or organization cannot possibly amass all of the necessary ingredients to deal effectively with this multi-faceted problem. Any effective attempt toward prevention, treatment, and control must take into account and make the best use of existing organizations and institutions that impact youth in their daily life. This is particularly crucial in the school setting. Timely identification and appropriate referrals of students who exhibit behaviorial indicators of underlying problems would facilitate effective remediation. Planning and implementation ideally should be done on a joint basis, recognizing the needs of the child and clearly delineating the roles and relationships of various service providers in the community.

Youth Involvement

Many times, in efforts to address issues of community concern, decision makers neglect to incorporate youth in the planning process. Realistically, it is the responsibility of caring, concerned adults to promote, develop, and establish avenues for involvement by youth. Moreover, the effort required to meaningfully involve youth can enhance both the lives of individual young people and the effectiveness of the resulting programs.

Unfortunately, it is a great temptation for adults to include only those young people who are viewed as leaders. Those who may be in a better position to know the potential weaknesses of endeavors are often those youth who are seldom asked for input, youth who have been in trouble because of drugs, youth for whom school holds little appeal, youth who choose the streets and parking lots instead of recreation centers and school activities as places to spend their time. These are youth who may have effective ideas about ways to impact the community and help other youth with similar problems. All youth must be looked upon as viable resources in any attempt to address the problems of substance abuse.

Conclusion

Addressing the issues of drug abuse must go far beyond monitoring trends in drug using behavior. Information gathered in this project, as well as that available from other sources, clearly indicates the need for concerted attention in the areas of prevention, education, and early intervention. These efforts must be maximized at many levels: the public and private schools must accept the reality that they may be the first line of defense in these endeavors; parents must face the fact that substance abuse is a problem that cuts across all social, economic, religious, and geographic lines and that they must be informed and aware; all levels of government must be willing to make available the resources necessary to effectively address the problem; communities must be open to broad-based planning, program development and support.

As the project data indicates, school dropouts, and those at risk of becoming one, may have a greater need for early identification and special attention. Although there are certain relatively obvious manifestations of distress - failing a grade, prior suspension or expulsion, siblings who have quit school - students must be assessed individually in order to pick up subtle indicators of such distress.

An awareness must be developed that a significant number of children come to school from homes that may not be meeting their basic needs. These children may be poor, abused, or in the grip of a family crisis such as divorce, chronic unemployment, or an alcoholic parent; they may have limited social experience and low self-esteem, which potentiates a child being overly vulnerable to failure and failure oriented behaviors.

It is difficult to draw causal interpretations from the data regarding the interplay of substance abuse and dropping out of school, though it is possible to state inferences. Other studies have found that adolescent drinking and drug taking behavior are directly related to truancy, lower expectations, and less interest in academic achievement. Previous studies have also shown that school grades have a negative relationship with drug use, while truancy bears a strong positive relationship to substance usage.

In conclusion, the premise must be accepted that the characteristics of "at-risk" youth reflect more than "a desire to be rid of school". The problems are multiple and complex. Early prevention, combined with timely identification and intervention when the problems emerge, and caring involvment is potentially the most significant force in the necessary efforts ahead.

Appendix A
Personal Interview Questionnaire

WHY WE ASK YOU

Some answers to your questions . . .

Question: What is this survey all about?

Ans.: It's about the school-dropout population in Arkansas and the reasons why students quit. All over the country there's a growing concern about the education of our young people and an interest in improving our school system. One area of focus is the high number of students dropping out before they complete their high school program or graduate.

Question: Why do a survey?

Ans.: It's the best way to get the facts/information we need to make wise decisions in the effort to improve the public schools. By taking a survey we can gather information, not obtainable in any other way, such as the feelings, experiences, expectations, disappointments, likes and dis'ikes of the Arkansas students who have chosen to leave school before graduating.

Question: How was I chosen?

Ans.: Just as an experienced cook can tell how a large pot of soup will taste by trying only a spoonful, it is possible to learn the facts and opinions of a very large group of people by talking to a small number of them. But, unlike soup-tasting, "sampling" people for surveys requires a scientific method of selection. This method gives every member of a group an equal chance of being selected, and therefore, it's very important that we have an interview with you, as you are one of the few selected from many.

Question: What will happen to my interview?

Ans.: It will be turned in to the University of Arkansas at the Little Rock Research Office, where each interview is to be processed so that the responses can be combined with those from several hundred other interviews. The results of all are analyzed and written into a report which presents a picture of the students' opinions and experiences. No identifying information is retained on the interview. No information on any individual is ever released. All answers are held in strict confidence.

Question: Who are the interviewers?

Ans.: The interviewers are people who are trained to record your answers objectively and accurately. They are pledged to keep in strictest confidence anything said in an interview. They are employees of Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families.

Question: What if I don't know the right answers?

Ans.: This interview is not a test - so there are no "right" answers. The questions are about your opinions and experiences. Most people we talk to enjoy the interview and appreciate the chance to tell how they really feel about the subject of the study.

Question: Who is doing the survey?

Ans.: Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to the goal of solving problems for Arkansas' children is doing the study of the dropout population. It is funded by the Rockefeller Foundation and the Office on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention.

ARKANSAS ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
931 Donaghey Building
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

INFORMED CONSENT

Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families

Our organization, in cooperation with the Rockefeller Foundation, Center for Research and Public Policy (University of Arkansas); and OADAP, is beginning a research project that involves school age children. The purpose of the research study is to better understand the school dropout issue. Allowing your child to participate in this study will involve the following activity:

1. Making a visit to your home for about one and one-half hours to interview your child regarding typical experiences about adolescence and some general questions about background.

Your participation in this project in entirely voluntary and in deciding whether to participate in the study, please consider the following:

1. All of the information obtained will be treated in a professional and confidential manner. Any/all professional reports or publications , coming from this study will be such that no one will know the names of individual participants.
2. There may be no immediate benefit to your or your child as a result of participating in this study; any benefits will come from our improved knowledge of the student dropout issue.

I (we) understand the purpose and conditions of my (our) participating in this research project. I (we) agree that my (our) child, _____ may participate.

_____ Date

_____ Parent or Legal Guardian

1a. Were you absent several days each school year during elementary school?

1. yes
2. no

2a. Did you discuss your situation with anyone at school before dropping out/ being dropped?

1. yes (who)_____
2. no

3a. Do you think you read below grade level?

1. yes
2. no

ARKANSAS ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

1. What is your age (in years)? _____

2. Are you currently enrolled in school?

   1. Yes
   2. No

3. What grade are/were you in?

   9th 10th 11th 12th

4. What was the reason for your leaving school? (PROBE)

   _____

   _____

5. Would you like to go back to school?

   1. Yes
   2. No

6. If yes, are you going back?

   1. Yes
   2. No

7. Did you get along with your teachers?

   1. Yes
   2. No

8. Did you get along with other students?

   1. Yes
   2. No

9. What will you do if you don't go to school?

   _____

10. How significant or valuable do you feel as a person?

    1. Very
    2. Somewhat
    3. Not very
    4. Not at all
    5. Don't know

11. Are your parents or is your parent

1. Married?
2. Divorced?
3. Separated?
4. Widowed?
5. Single?
6. Live-in?

12. How well would you say you get along with your parent(s)?

1. Very poorly
2. Somewhat below average
3. About average
4. Somewhat above average
5. Very well
6. Don't know

13. (If there is a stepparent) How well would you say you get along with your stepparent?

1. Very poorly
2. Somewhat below average
3. About average
4. Somewhat above average
5. Very well
6. Don't know

14. (If you have two parents living with you) How well would you say they usually get along?

1. Not applicable (living with only one parent)
2. Very poorly
3. Somewhat below average
4. About average
5. Somewhat above average
6. Very well
7. Don't know

15. Do your parents or does your parent or guardian receive any public assistance payments, such as food stamps or aid to dependent children, etc?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know

16. (If living with both parents) Do both of them have jobs?

1. Not applicable--living with one parent.
2. Yes, both parents have a job.
3. No, only one parent has a job. WHICH PARENT? _____
4. No, both parents are currently unemployed.

17. (If living with only one parent) Does he or she have a job?

    1. Not applicable--living with two parents.
    2. Yes, parent has a job. WHICH PARENT? _____
    3. No, parent does not have a job.

18. How many brothers and sisters do you have? (If none, put 0.)

    Number of brothers _____ Number of sisters _____

19. Do you take care of a younger child who is not in school?

    1. Yes
    2. No

20. How many brothers and/or sisters have left school before graduation?

    Number of brothers _____ Number of sisters _____

21. Why did they leave school?

    _____

    _____

22. Do your parents let you date?

    1. Yes
    2. No

23. Do you have a job? (Please circle all that apply.)

    1. Yes, part-time job
    2. Yes, full-time job
    3. Yes, occasional
    4. No, job

24. IF YES: What type of work do you do? _____

    _____

25. Where do you get your spending money? (Please circle all that apply.)

    1. Full-time job
    2. Part-time job
    3. Occasional job
    4. Allowance
    5. Other (Please specify) _____

26. Have any of the following things ever happened to you? (Please circle all that apply.)

1. Being fired or laid off from a job
2. Trouble in school
3. Bad grades in school
4. A serious physical injury or illness
5. Parents get a divorce
6. A death in your immediate family
7. A serious emotional problem
8. Trouble with the police
9. Failed a grade and held back
10. Trouble in your family
11. Suspension/expulsion from school
12. Put in jail or detention
13. Pregnancy
14. Abortion

27. I am going to read a few statements about how you may feel about the world around you. Please tell me if you strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, or strongly disagree with the statements. (Please circle only <u>one</u> answer for each different question.)

	SA	A	UNDECIDED	D	SD	DK
A person is foolish to keep on going to school if he/she can get a job right away.	1	2	3	4	5	9
I have little influence over the things that happen to me.	1	2	3	4	5	9
These days a person doesn't know whom he/she can count on.	1	2	3	4	5	9
It is not always wise to plan too far ahead because many things turn out to be a matter of luck anyway.	1	2	3	4	5	9
Most people really don't care what happens to the other fellow.	1	2	3	4	5	9
I feel that I don't have enough control over the direction my life is taking.	1	2	3	4	5	9
Money is the most important thing in life.	1	2	3	4	5	9
School officials aren't really interested in the average student.	1	2	3	4	5	9
Who gets ahead in life often depends on who was lucky enough to be in the right place first.	1	2	3	4	5	9
Many times I decide what to do because my friends are doing it.	1	2	3	4	5	9
To make money there are no right and wrong ways anymore, only easy and hard ways.	1	2	3	4	5	9

28. Do you think that the use of alcohol by people in your community is a problem?

1. Yes, probably a problem
2. Yes, a moderate problem
3. Yes, definitely a serious problem
4. No, definitely not a problem
5. Don't know

29. Do you think that the use of drugs by people in your community is a problem?

1. Yes, probably a problem
2. Yes, a moderate problem
3. Yes, definitely a serious problem
4. No, definitely not a problem
5. Don't know

30. Now, I am going to read a list of drugs. Please tell me the last time you tried any of the following drugs WITHOUT A PRESCRIPTION. Choose one of the answers by number on this card as I read the name of each drug. Remember your answers are strictly confidential.

	IN THE PAST WEEK	IN THE PAST MONTH	IN THE PAST YEAR	HAVE TRIED BUT DO NOT USE REGULARLY	WOULD LIKE TO TRY, BUT NEVER HAVE	NEVER HAVE TRIED
A. Alcohol	1	2	3	4	5	6
B. Cigarettes (Tobacco)	1	2	3	4	5	6
C. Marijuana	1	2	3	4	5	6
D. Hashish or Hashish oil	1	2	3	4	5	6
E. Cocaine (coke, snow)	1	2	3	4	5	6
F. Amphetamines (uppers, speed, bennies, pep pills, diet pills)	1	2	3	4	5	6
G. Barbituates (downers, reds, yellows, Seconal, qualudes)	1	2	3	4	5	6
H. Tranquilizers (Valium, Librium)	1	2	3	4	5	6
I. Hallucinogens (LSD, Mescaline, peyote, mushrooms, PCP)	1	2	3	4	5	6
J. Opiates (opium, codeine base cough syrups, codeine, demorol, delaudid, morphine)	1	2	3	4	5	6
K. Inhalants (glue, freon, poppers, paint thinner, aerosols, gasoline)	1	2	3	4	5	6
L. Heroin (horse, junk)	1	2	3	4	5	6

31. How often have you tried each of the drugs on the list WITHOUT A PRESCRIPTION? (Circle only one answer for each type of drug.)

	ALMOST EVERY DAY	SEVERAL TIMES A WEEK	A FEW TIMES A MONTH	HAVE TRIED A FEW TIMES A YEAR	ONLY ONCE OR TWICE EVER	NEVER HAVE TRIED
A. Alcohol	1	2	3	4	5	6
B. Cigarettes (Tobacco)	1	2	3	4	5	6
C. Marijuana	1	2	3	4	5	6
D. Hashish or Hashish oil	1	2	3	4	5	6
E. Cocaine (coke, snow)	1	2	3	4	5	6
F. Amphetamines (uppers, speed, bennies, pep pills, diet pills)	1	2	3	4	5	6
G. Barbituates (downers, reds, yellows, Seconal, qualudes)	1	2	3	4	5	6
H. Tranquilizers (Valium, Librium)	1	2	3	4	5	6
I. Hallucinogens (LSD, Mescaline, peyote, mushrooms, PCP)	1	2	3	4	5	6
J. Opiates (opium, codeine base cough syrups, codeine, demorol, delaudid, morphine)	1	2	3	4	5	6
K. Inhalants (glue, freon, poppers, paint thinner, aerosols, gasoline)	1	2	3	4	5	6
L. Heroin (horse, junk)	1	2	3	4	5	6

31a. How often did you try each of the drugs on the list (WITHOUT A PRESCRIPTION) when you were in school? Circle only one answer for each type of drug.

	ALMOST EVERY DAY	SEVERAL TIMES A WEEK	A FEW TIMES A MONTH	HAVE TRIED A FEW TIMES A YEAR	ONLY ONCE OR TWICE EVER	NEVER HAVE TRIED
A. Alcohol	1	2	3	4	5	6
B. Cigarettes (Tobacco)	1	2	3	4	5	6
C. Marijuana	1	2	3	4	5	6
D. Hashish or Hashish oil	1	2	3	4	5	6
E. Cocaine (coke, snow)	1	2	3	4	5	6
F. Amphetamines (uppers, speed, bennies, pep pills, diet pills)	1	2	3	4	5	6
G. Barbituates (downers, reds, yellows, Seconal, qualudes)	1	2	3	4	5	6
H. Tranquilizers (Valium, Librium)	1	2	3	4	5	6
I. Hallucinogens (LSD, Mescaline, peyote, mushrooms, PCP)	1	2	3	4	5	6
J. Opiates (opium, codeine base cough syrups, codeine, demorol, delaudid, morphine)	1	2	3	4	5	6
K. Inhalants (glue, freon, poppers, paint thinner, aerosols, gasoline)	1	2	3	4	5	6
L. Heroin (horse, junk)	1	2	3	4	5	6

32. Where do you usually use the following drugs? Choose the number as I read the name of the drugs. (Can be more than one answer.)

	AT OR AROUND HOME	AT SOCIAL GATHERINGS	IN CARS	AT FRIENDS' HOUSES	AT OR AROUND SCHOOL	AT OR AROUND WORK	NEVER HAVE TRIED
A. Alcohol	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B. Cigarettes (Tobacco)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C. Marijuana	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D. Hashish or Hashish oil	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
E. Cocaine (coke, snow)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F. Amphetamines (uppers, speed, bennies, pep pills, diet pills)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
G. Barbituates (downers, reds, yellows, Seconal, qualudes)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
H. Tranquilizers (Valium, Librium)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I. Hallucinogens (LSD, Mescaline, peyote, mushrooms, PCP)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
J. Opiates (opium, codeine base cough syrups, codeine, demorol, delaudid, morphine	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
K. Inhalants (glue, freon, poppers, paint thinner, aerosols, gasoline)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
L. Heroin (horse, junk)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

33. About how old were you when you first tried these drugs WITHOUT A PRESCRIPTION? (Enter age for each type of drug tried. If never tried, circle the never tried number.)

	AGE	NEVER HAVE TRIED
A. Alcohol	( )	1
B. Cigarettes (Tobacco)	( )	1
C. Marijuana	( )	1
D. Hashish or Hashish oil	( )	1
E. Cocaine (coke, snow)	( )	1
F. Amphetamines (uppers, speed, bennies, pep pills, diet pills)	( )	1
G. Barbituates (downers, reds, yellows, Seconal, qualudes)	( )	1
H. Tranquilizers (Valium, Librium)	( )	1
I. Hallucinogens (LSD, Mescaline, peyote, mushrooms, PCP)	( )	1
J. Opiates (opium, codeine base cough syrups, codeine, demorol, delaudid, morphine)	( )	1
K. Inhalants (glue, freon, poppers, paint thinner, aerosols, gasoline)	( )	1
L. Heroin (horse, junk)	( )	1

34. Why do you think you do not use drugs? (Please circle all that apply. If using drugs, please circle the "Not applicable" answer.)

1. Not applicable
2. I am afraid of getting caught.
3. I think drugs have a harmful effect on a person's body.
4. My friends don't use drugs, so I don't use drugs either.
5. I have seen the bad effects that drug use has on some people.
6. I want to be in control of my life, so I don't use drugs.
7. I have religious feelings about not using drugs.
8. I am too busy with school and other activities to get involved with drugs.
9. I cannot afford to buy drugs.
10. I do not know where to get drugs.
11. Other (Please specify) _____

_____

35. Why do you think you use drugs? (Please circle all that apply.)

1. I never use drugs.
2. I am curious about the effect of certain drugs.
3. I enjoy the feeling I get from drugs.
4. All of my friends use drugs, so I use them too.
5. Drugs help me cope with life.
6. Drugs help me increase my ability or awareness.
7. I'm not worried about getting caught.
8. Drugs are easy to get.
9. Drugs help me be accepted into the group I run around with.
10. Drugs help me feel at ease with the opposite sex.
11. Drugs relieve boredom for me.
12. Drug use is a habit with me.
13. I enjoy the excitement of using drugs.
14. Other (Please specify)_____

_____

36. In your opinion, how easy is it for you to get the drugs that you usually use?

1. Never use drugs
2. Very difficult
3. Difficult
4. Rather easy
5. Easy
6. Very easy

37. Have you ever sold drugs?

1. Yes
2. No

38. Where do you get most of the information you know about drugs? (Please circle all that apply.)

1. Friends
2. Books
3. Magazines
4. Relative or family member
5. Minister or parent
6. T.V. or radio
7. School teacher
8. Newspaper
9. Local drug education program
10. Other (Please specify)_____

_____

39. If someone you cared about had a drug problem, where would you first go for help? (PLEASE CIRCLE ONLY ONE ANSWER.)

1. Would not seek outside help
2. Would not know how to seek help
3. Medical professional
4. Friend
5. Relative or family member
6. Minister, Rabbi, or Priest
7. Teacher or school official
8. Police
9. Social Worker
10. Drug counselor
11. Other _____

_____

40. Do you think your parents know that you have tried or use drugs?

1. Not applicable (Have not tried/used drugs.)
2. Yes
3. No

41. Do your parents or does your parent think that the use of drugs by people in your community is a problem?

1. Yes, probably a problem
2. Yes, a moderate problem
3. Yes, definitely a serious problem
4. No, definitely not a problem
5. Don't know

42. Do your parents or does your parent think that the use of alcohol by people in your community is a problem?

1. Yes, probably a problem
2. Yes, a moderate problem
3. Yes, definitely a serious problem
4. No, definitely not a problem
5. Don't know

43. Do your parents or does your parent drink alcoholic beverages?

1. Yes, both parents
2. Yes, one parent WHICH PARENT? _____
3. No
4. Don't know

44. Do you feel either of your parents have a drinking/drug problem?

1. Yes, both parents
2. Yes, mother
3. Yes, father
4. No
5. Don't know

45. Do your parents or does your parent take drugs WITHOUT A PRESCRIPTION?

1. Yes, both parents
2. Yes, one parent WHICH PARENT?_____
3. No
4. Don't know

46. Do you think your parent(s) misuse prescription drugs?

1. Yes, both parents
2. Yes, one parent
3. No
4. Don't know

47. Do you and your parents or parent talk about drug use and abuse?

1. Yes, once or twice
2. Yes, occasionally
3. Yes, frequently
4. No, never

48. Compared to other families, how would you describe your family's income?

1. Very poor
2. Poor
3. A little less than average
4. About average
5. A little more than average
6. Wealthy
7. Very wealthy

49. On a scale from one to ten, how religious would you say you are? (Circle)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Very religious		Quite religious		About average		Less than average		Not religious at all	

Interviewer mark after interview

Sex:

1. Female _____
2. Male _____

Race:

1. Black _____
2. White _____
3. Chicano, Mexican-American _____
4. Other _____

Appendix B

Sample of Detailed Suspension, Expulsion and Attendance Policies

Definitions

1. Expulsion: Prohibition of a student from entering the school or school grounds (except for a prearranged conference with an administrator) until the end of the semester, the end of the current school year or permanently, depending upon the severity of the offense, with loss of academic credit. This action shall be taken by the board of education only.

2. Suspension: Prohibition of a student from entering the school or school grounds (except for a prearranged conference with an administrator) for a period of time set by the principal of the school or the superintendent. Suspensions normally will not be longer than ten (10) school days including the day on which the offense occurred unless it is deemed a long-term suspension which must be determined by the board of education only.

Attendance

1. Absences for reasons other than the following will be unexcused: a) personal illness; b) death or critical illness within the immediate family (defined as parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, and or relative in the same household); c) school sponsored trips; d) vital appointments that can be obtained only during school hours (doctor, dental, etc.); e) an emergency situation acceptable to the principal, properly reported by a parent or student prior to the absence if possible.

2. Failure to present a note signed by the parent or guardian upon the day of student's return will result in the absence being unexcused. Work missed due to an unexcused absence cannot be made up.

3. Absences due to suspension will be unexcused and students will not be allowed to make up work missed.

4. Students absent for 10 consecutive days will be dropped from the rolls unless the parents/guardians have contacted the school regarding the nature of the absence.

5. Three unexcused tardies will constitute a one-day absence in any class.

6. Parents/guardians will be notified of student absences after the 6th, 9th, and 12th days of absence.

7. Following the 12th absence, [presumably not consecutive], a student's attendance will be subject to review by the principal as to whether the student will be allowed to remain in a class or school. Factors to be taken into consideration in retaining a student in class or school will be: a) number of days missed; b) reason for absences; c) student conduct, and; d) whether or not the student is keeping up his/her work.

Standards of Conduct

Disregard of Directions or Commands (Insubordination)

1. Detention or corporal punishment.

2. Three (3) days suspension-parent conference.

3. Five (5) days suspension-parent conference-probation.

4. Suspension and recommendation for expulsion.

Drug Policy

Any student enrolled in school caught in the possession of, selling, or under the influence of illegal drugs or other controlled substances such as amphetamines or barbituates, etc. (as defined in Act 590 in 1971 of the State of Arkansas as amended) while on school grounds, school property or school sponsored events at home or away will be immediately suspended from school and recommended for expulsion. All evidence and/or facts relating to the incident will be turned over to the local police department.

Alcohol

Students found to be in possession of or under the influence of alcohol will be immediately suspended for not less than five school days from all school activities and classes. A second offense will result in the student being recommended for expulsion for the remainder of the school term. In order for a student to be readmitted after a first offense, the students and parents/guardians must agree to counseling for the student as deemed appropriate by the school counselor and principal.

Closed Campus

After arrival on the school campus, a student shall not leave the campus without permission from school authorities and/or parents.

1. Three (3) days detention-contact parent-loss of permit one (1) week.

2. Five (5) days detention-parent conference-loss of permit for semester.

3. Five (5) days suspension-parent conference.

Physical Abuse or Assault by a Student on School Employee

A student who commits assault and/or battery upon a member of the faculty or staff shall be recommended for expulsion.

Physical Abuse or Assault by a Student on Another Student

1. Detention or corporal punishment-contact parent.

2. Three (3) days suspension-parent conference.

3. Five (5) days suspension-parent conference-probation.

4. Suspension and recommendation for expulsion.

Indecent Exposure and Sexual Advances

Indecent Exposure: a) Suspension and recommendation for expulsion.

Improper Sexual Advances: a) Five (5) days suspension-parent conference-probation; b) Suspension and recommendation for expulsion.

Pomb Threats

Students will be referred to the legal authorities and will be recommended for expulsion.

Theft and Extortion

1. Three (3) days suspension-contact parents-restitution.

2. Five (5) days suspension-parent conference-restitution-probation.

3. Suspension and recommendation for expulsion.

Damage, Destruction, or Theft of School Property

The school district will attempt to recover damage from the student destroying school property. Parents of any minor student under the age of 18 will be liable for damages caused by said minor.

1. Detention or corporal punishment-parent contact.

2. Three (3) days suspension-parent conference.

3. Five (5) days suspension-parent conference-probation.

4. Suspension and recommendation for expulsion.

Disorderly Conduct

1. Detention or corporal punishment-parent contact.

2. Five (5) days detention-parent conference.

3. Three (3) days suspension-parent conference-probation.

4. Suspension and recommendation for expulsion.

Profanity, Verbal Abuse, Obscene Gestures

1. Detention three (3) days or corporal punishment.

2. Detention ten (10) days-parent contact.

3. Suspension three (3) days.

Persistent Disregard for School Rules

A student who persists in acts of misconduct after reasonable efforts have been made by the school to secure the student's adherence to the established rules shall be recommended for expulsion. Efforts toward behavior modification will be made prior to recommendation for expulsion except when very serious offenses have been committed.

Smoking and Smokeless Tobacco

1. Detention or corporal punishment-the tobacco product shall be confiscated and destroyed.

2. Three (3) days suspension-contact parents and all products confiscated and destroyed.

3. Five (5) days suspension-parent conference-probation and all products confiscated and destroyed.

4. Suspension and recommendation for expulsion.

Public Display of Affection

1. Warning.

2. Detention or corporal punishment-contact parent.

3. Three (3) days suspension-contact parent.